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ALCESTIS

VOL. II.

J. H. Thackeray
1873.

ALCESTIS.

‘So love was crowned, but music won the cause’

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1873

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OF
THE SECOND VOLUME

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PART I.—*continued.*

CHAPTER XII.

LISA'S CARES.

THE next morning the little Klosterhaus garden and court resounded once more with the familiar sound of our hero's violin, coming from his open window, and although mingled with the shrill notes of the porter's canary-bird on the first floor, and the ceaseless harpsichord of the house, Josquin's exercises filled one good soul with delight, as she sat in a sort of rapture that morning in the sunshine. Lisa used to say in the old days that she learnt more from Josquin's violin than from any other teaching, and now, after three years' absence, she heard the dear sound again! And he was there, settled once more near her, and it

seemed possible that those days were about to return in all their fulness.

During these years that she had continued to write steadily, as if she suspected no change, she had not been without vague fears about Josquin. Ignorant as she was of the new folks to whom he belonged, she yet exaggerated to herself, in the seclusion she had chosen, the chasm that separated them—the dangers of the gay society in Vienna. She heard of his great success there, but he himself had not written in the buoyancy of any great hope or satisfaction in his art, and his compositions seemed constantly to fall short. When she had met him, she had been quick to discern the slight nonchalance in his manner; but Josquin's words had not been those of a young man of the world. He had raved freshly as ever over his new discovery. He was the same, and her fears were dispelled. 'With you I hope to work out

fruitfully all that I have learnt : ' these words and many others had given her unutterable happiness.

It was a golden picture for the future that Lisa was making to the sound of Josquin's exercises. Who could doubt, she thought, in looking at her friend's intelligent face, and listening to his fiery playing, that he would go on to be a creator himself? Together they would tread new paths of productiveness. In her happiness the thought of herself did not much occupy Lisa, but she could not but feel that she too had gained something in the last years, that the days of her sad girlhood were over—a girlhood full of anxieties, self-reproaches, and small miseries, and that she was a woman now with a power felt by many.

And now Regenfurth came in to busy over domestic matters, and, to the surprise of the Gouvernante, Lisa helped to bring order into

the room, and began arranging the flowers left on one side the previous night. Then Josquin himself entered and praised the comfort of it. He brought under his arm a pile of his own manuscripts and the score of the 'Orfeo,' and eager to introduce Lisa to his new-discovered god, he sat down at once to the harpsichord, and the morning quickly passed while he played to her delighted ears the great music of Gluck.

They were interrupted by visitors. Before Josquin, enjoying her enthusiasm, had time to rise from the instrument, the door was flung open and two men stood in it, bowing to give each other precedence. One was the Capellmeister, the other a tall stranger, whose face was not quite unknown to Josquin. The latter entered at last, followed by Hasse, who carried a roll of music under his arm, and wore those severe and perturbed looks which he seemed to put

on and off like his spectacles. It seemed evident, in spite of their extreme politeness, that he and his companion had been differing all the way. Lisa received them, the one with the manner of a daughter, the other with a shy and defiant air, such as Josquin imagined she might show to her patron. He would have liked to listen to what the stranger said as he addressed her in Italian; but the Capellmeister had seen him, and came forward with unwonted warmth to greet him.

‘What, Dorioz! already here?’

‘Master, I was just coming to you, will you receive me? I have come back to work.’

‘Aye, aye! I have heard all about it from Vulpius. And so you have thought yourself too good to be his Excellency’s Kammer-musikus any longer? Well, come and see us; Faustina still talks about you. What have you got to tell me?’

Many were the messages Josquin came laden with for the Caro Sassone from all the towns and courts at which he had stayed ; and he began telling him all he could think of, when they were interrupted by the stranger :

‘ Dear Maestro, the roll of music, if you please. I will leave it for the Fräulein Vaara to look at, at her leisure ; but I just want her to sing the air of my opera that I think will suit her so admirably.’

Here Lisa astonished Josquin by breaking in vehemently ; ‘ If it *were* your Excellency’s opera, I should willingly give it careful study, and sing your music to the best of my ability ; but this mixture you speak of is too little to my taste for me to undertake in any way,’—and she read out from the roll of music, ‘ The Medonte, a new serious opera ; the music selected from the works of Sarti, Anfossi, Branchi, Cremonese,

adapted and arranged by his Excellency the Count von Plauen, and dedicated to the Fräulein Lisa Vaara by the Transcriber.'

Here a sudden explosion of laughter from Josquin was met by a severe look from the Capellmeister, who evidently was much in awe of his Excellency. Lisa had read this scheme for an opera with such deep tragedy in her tones and looks that it had sounded irresistibly absurd in Josquin's ears. The Count only scowled upon the young man, whom he had not observed before; but even Lisa looked anxiously for a moment to see if the visitor's feelings were much outraged. She seemed to have less power left to resist his importunity after Josquin's rudeness. 'I thank your Excellency for your kind dedication,' she said; 'you must indeed pardon me, but my prejudices are strong, and I could never give you satisfaction if I sang what so little pleases me, as a *pasticcio* of this

kind. Each thing, good in itself, is destroyed by being cut up.'

'Oh! the public taste requires it; it is for your own advantage that I want you to sing this music. Your excellent friend the Capellmeister sees with me the necessity for giving a change to the Court. We want to keep a good balance of feeling in our public. Now try this charming *Scena* with me; indeed, I am surprised at your resistance.' He looked towards Josquin, and the Capellmeister came up persuasively.

'Come, Lisa my child, sing it. His Excellency says truly that we must make concessions now-a-days. We cannot afford to play with our public in these hard times;' and Josquin was surprised to see Lisa give in and begin a recitative, followed by the duet, which seemed, indeed, little worthy of the pure and lofty manner in which she rendered it. The Count sang with great finish of style

but imperceptible voice. Could he be, thought Josquin, the owner of the carriage that had come to fetch Lisa—the giver of all the gifts that were returned? And how was it that the Capellmeister treated him with such respect, and she with so little disdain? He had flung his head back while she sang in an ecstasy of admiration, and after executing his own part, exclaimed: ‘Dear Maestro, it will be a complete success, believe me; Caffarelli will be here to take the tenor;’ and without waiting to hear anything farther from the demurring Lisa, he began to make some alterations with a pencil at the harpsichord. While he stooped over it Lisa came up to Josquin.

‘Well, what do you think?’

‘I don’t think that you will sing in it.’

‘Who is that fellow in the corner?’ whispered his Excellency to the Capellmeister, by no means amiably. ‘Oh! an

old pupil of mine : was dismissed from my choir three years ago, has since been travelling with Von Lichtenberg as Kammer-musikus.'

'To be sure, I remember seeing him once at your house,' the other said. Then turning to Lisa ;

'Fräulein Vaara, I will not remain to press on you any longer a work for which you seem not to be in the mood. Once more I tell you it is in your own interest I wish you to sing it ; and perhaps when you are left alone you may judge differently. I think I remember to have seen in a different position the friend who now appears to influence you,' he added, with an uncomfortable look at Josquin.

'No, your Excellency,' Lisa here broke in, 'I am not influenced by any friend. I would not willingly refuse your request, for I owe so much to your kindness.'

'Lisa, how do I know the man's face ?

Who is this enraged coxcomb?' Josquin said immediately he was gone.

Elisabetha was pale and agitated. 'The new Director of the opera,' she replied impatiently.

'What! Count von Plauen, *Surintendant de NOS plaisirs*?' exclaimed Josquin. 'Oh! what an ill-timed laugh! my unlucky star has risen.'

It must be remembered what an important office the Intendant filled in Josquin's days, when the Opera was the private property of an arbitrary Court, and he was the representative of its taste. He was more powerful than the Capellmeister himself. Once, indeed, the Sassone had had things all his own way, but imperceptibly he had fallen into the second place; and now, after all the spoiling, bitterness and mistrust were his portion in old age, and he submitted, often unconsciously. So the reader will understand

the depression which overcame Lisa as she spoke of her master's oppressor.

'My unlucky star has risen!' Josquin had exclaimed. But in her old severe way Lisa said: 'Yes, we thrill at every word of this man with fear or pleasure—we depend on him for daily bread. Is this the freedom of art which we used to talk about, Josquin?'

'Never mind, Lisa, so long as he appreciates you; you move the hand, dear sister, which moves the opera which moves the whole world! But the astonishing thing is that you, my dear, who are looked upon as a puritan among artists, should have fascinated such a fashionable gentleman.'

'Why do you say that?' she said; 'how do you know?'

'Forgive me, Lisa, but he is in love; and you cannot deny that there was fire enough in your four high C's to kindle a cold heart.' He spoke naturally and gaily, but his words

had troubled her, and she said with a sort of weary sadness :

‘What can I do but sing my best when I refuse to oblige him ? But oh ! it is wretched. It seems to me, when I sing before him, as though I were powerless for good, and were giving voice to some evil spirit in the air. Why don’t we singers cultivate our art in our garrets amongst ourselves, contented with that rather than with success at such a price ?’

‘Because it is such a pleasure to the unprosperous to see their talented friends before the world. My words have depressed you, Lisa, but I assure you I am only afraid of myself, not of the influence of any Intendants on my career. If only we stick to music and love it, we can snap our fingers at *Nos plaisirs* and their refined inspector.’

She did not quite understand his meaning, but he rose up to go to the Capellmeister’s,

saying he should be in another scrape, and she only stretched out her hand in good-bye. They had talked as if they had been boy and girl; they had spoken with all their old instincts, and yet after he was gone and Lisa sat on, wondering and anxious, she was more oppressed than before; strange cares of life had overtaken her. Neither was Josquin's heart as free as of old.

But when he went to Faustina the evil forebodings were put out of his head, though indeed the Intendant was not spared during the visit. When Josquin entered the little boudoir in which he had once found Lichtenberg beside Faustina, she was sitting mournfully alone without book or occupation. In a moment he perceived that she was changed, older, sadder. But as soon as she saw him, she held up her arms and hailed him with a warmth and affection which took him by surprise. Josquin was her Blondel, her trouba-

dour, she had heard of his successes, he had come back to gladden her in her troubles ; he had left the odious Viennese for his old friends—Hasse had need of all his pupils. Then Faustina said she had received a letter from Count Lichtenberg—she knew all, it was noble ! His Excellence had told her the whole history of his coming away. The Baron von Gasparein had returned, and the flight of the violinist was the talk of the town. The fantastic Count was the only person who was not very much surprised by Josquin's behaviour. He, indeed, did not blame him for avoiding anything that might interfere with his profession, but he regretted his loss, and sent the young composer a message through Faustina, to beg him not to lose his time.

But here Hasse came in, and Faustina put a finger on her lips. ' We must keep it all a secret in Dresden,' she whispered ; and

then she began to tell the young man of her husband's grievances. 'After the first siege,' she said, 'two kings sat in the opera on the night of Frederick's entry to hear the Capellmeister's music performed. After this siege,—his salary was cut down'! She talked of returning to Vienna, of leaving an ungrateful town, but Josquin made her listen to the messages he brought her from great men; and, after he had played to her, she said she was thankful to love music still, and he left her comforted.

CHAPTER XIII.

POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE 'Medonte' was rehearsed, but happily for Elisabetha, the Count von Plauen was immediately afterwards summoned away to Warsaw, and then came the close of the season; and when the Court left Dresden the theatre was closed, the vexed Capellmeister sought the consolations of a milk-cure, and there came to Lisa a reprieve from the fears and anxieties which were the drawback to her happy new life. All the world was rushing off to the baths, or to the villas in the neighbouring hills, but she was thankful to remain at peace to enjoy the quiet of the town.

When the Court had departed the simple Dresdeners, we must believe, breathed the freer, for all that they worshipped it like the sun in heaven when present. It was the Court that shut them out from art and music and left dull and barren the places of popular entertainment not under its exclusive patronage. Later, the great-hearted Weber gained the noble victory for the cause of their national opera; but then, the people remained content with what they could get, not dreaming that the music of the aristocracy could be any more within their reach than the Italian language which went with it. But for all that, it was much the same happy public whom we like to see at this day fiddling and dancing, rising at four on Sunday mornings to hear music while drinking their early coffee, who sit in smiling pleasantries and garden squares where—oh unknown luxury to British holiday makers—the violins, flutes, and sweet bas-

soons mingle airs of Haydn and symphonies of Mozart with songs of birds, and rustling of summer leaves, while the sunshine plays in statued avenues such as we see painted on Meissen china cups and tea-pots. Let English reformers consider this sight, and English opera-goers feel ashamed in their two-guinea stalls. When the German public began to hear music in its tea-gardens it was not long to be kept out of the opera.

One of these favourite summer rendezvous was a terrace on the Elbe, a mile or two from the bridge, where there was a small open theatre, probably the original hall which has been rebuilt under the name of the Linckesches Bad. Here every evening there was an attempt at a concert chiefly consisting of unaccompanied chorus-singing to attract the people to come and drink coffee on the terrace.

One hot evening in August Josquin and Lisa accompanied by the decorous Regen-

furth had found their way to this charming terrace and sat, like the rest of the world about them, drinking coffee before small tables. It was an hour after sunset, but the sky and river were still aglow, small lamps were lit under the trees and myriads of fire-flies sported about. Here and there against the trees a light in a glass box suggested a Madonna or St. Joseph above it; but these little votive tapers represented no other devotion than that of the German public to their smoking, and were the generous sparks that afforded light for all their pipes. Josquin, too, was smoking, Regenfurth was knitting a stocking; Lisa, sitting on her straw chair as if it were a tragedy throne, with her cloak thrown off because of the heat, looked very happy. Charles would have laughed and pretended to be astonished had he seen his cousin at the end of two months sitting thus contented with the old simple existence. But yes,

Josquin was quite contented ; the good impetus he had received in his music still carried him on, and he was working hard with the promise of the Capellmeister that he should be first violin in the orchestra at the beginning of the next season. Sometimes the image of Cécile came with disturbing power, but in his present life there was little to recall her. Cécile was not an abiding influence, she was only irresistible when present—while Lisa was wholly in sympathy with his present life of work.

So, ever since the close of the Italian Opera which had been followed by the departure even of the Capellmeister and his wife, they had been left to themselves and led a truly idyllic existence. All the morning Josquin worked, and every day he had something new to bring Lisa to discuss with her. At five o'clock, when the city burnt with the hot sunshine, they would walk out towards

the beautiful harvest circling the town, or sit in a shade erected by Josquin on the house-top, and let the broad summer steep their spirits in calm happiness ; or sometimes, like this evening, they would take boat for some gardens or suburb on the Elbe.

There was one drawback to boating, however ; Lisa would not allow Josquin to row : this evening she had insisted upon rowing herself with the boatman to save his hands for the bow and violin. While she vigorously pulled against the stream with the reflection of the sky on her face, he contemplated her with some of the amazement of his boyhood, when he used to look upon her as a creature out of German fairy-land. When Regenfurth remonstrated, she only laughed, and answered as they landed : ‘ I do assure you that it is the best thing in the world for the voice ; I am ready

at this moment to sing—if it were not for the crowd !’

‘To be sure,’ said Josquin, ‘just like the Hexe Lorelei! Now I know of what you remind me : Hasse always said you were a witch, Lisa.’

A chorus was being sung in the small wooden theatre as they landed. Elisabetha looked round delighted, and swayed her head to the rhythm of the melodious part-singing ; for the music of the little Elbe theatre was full of character and faultlessly in tune. There was a little quiet applause, and a hum of talking, and then they began again.

‘I wonder if any of these good people have ever heard of you, Lisa?’ Josquin said. ‘I believe they are worthy of hearing you—see how quietly they listen. It would be truly delightful to see what effect some grand air of Marcello or John Sebastian would have upon them sung by you—’

‘ Sung by me ! What opportunity could they have ? ’

‘ Why not out of doors here ? Lisa, you have always said you would like to be a bird and sing without more ado, here is an opportunity ! ’

‘ But I can’t get up into a tree and sing down from there— ’

‘ No, but you can come into the theatre. It is a good inspiration ! Just now you said you felt fresh enough.—Come, my Hexe, and bewitch them all . . . ; but,’ he said, tenderly, ‘ after your exercise, it might hurt you.’

‘ Oh, I do not fear that. But Josquin, it is mad ; how am I to stand up and sing ? ’

‘ If that is all, I can manage it. You will consent, will you not ? ’ he persisted. ‘ In a minute I shall be back,’ and this he said as he jumped up and disappeared behind the wooden erection of the theatre. In a few

minutes the conductor of the chorus came forward, smiling and bowing profoundly. He and all his company felt themselves greatly honoured by the presence of the Fräulein Vaara. Her great talent was known to them, but their public had not had the happiness of hearing her. The gentleman had made a suggestion which gave him great delight. 'Ah, Fräulein!' the old man suddenly exclaimed, winding up his little speech, 'for years I have worked on here trying to make my music appreciated. You are the first listener of distinction who has recognised my efforts. If this day you will sing in my theatre, I shall feel that all my efforts are rewarded. I have conducted here for ten years. I can answer for the good behaviour of the audience.'

The old conductor's simplicity won Elisabetha's heart. There was the warm air, the deep twilight under the trees, the

great glow beyond of sky and river, the confused murmur of voices—the whole scene was unprosaic, and made the effort less difficult to Lisa. Suddenly, all the talk of the people was hushed, for she had entered the little theatre with her conductor. She had pulled a loose hood over her head, and wrapped her long black silk cloak about her, and her white face and neck could just be discerned against all the shadow, as she stood up to sing without accompaniment or help of any sort. The conductor made a little speech to the crowd, and there was a low murmur of surprise, then Lisa's voice took flight. She had chosen a wild German ballad. The first notes were like the ecstatic spring of a lark, and the singer seemed to luxuriate in the prolonged security of the high clear notes. Breathless and enchanted did all listen. Then she burst into a romantic melody full of the poetry of the North.

Showers of wild notes filled the air, more and more exulting and joyous, till the singer returned to the triumphant summits of her mighty soprano.

The people scarcely knew how to show their delight. After a moment's pause there was a sudden outburst of applause, and all rose and called for the singer again and again ; but she had disappeared ; Josquin had made her put her hand in his arm, and they escaped at the back and round the garden, to the place where their boat was moored. They were unobserved, but where was Regenfurth ? Josquin had seen her give one gasp of horror as Lisa disappeared into the theatre, and he did not know whether she had remained in her seat. Leaving Lisa for one moment, he ran back for the old lady. He found her still seated before the little table, but not alone. A gaunt figure in a clerical dress stood beside her. They were talking,

and as Josquin came up behind her, he recognised the nasal voice of Paradies. The priest turned round and showed him an attenuated face, greyer and thinner than of old.

There was no time, however, for explanations. Josquin could only take hold of Paradies' arm, and drag him with Regenfurth into the boat. A crowd had gathered at the terrace when they found which way the singer had gone, but the little party pushed off and disappeared, leaving them under the impression, Josquin said, that a witch or a bird had sung to them that night.

As soon as they were safe off, floating down the stream under the stars, the friends began to question Paradies, and they discovered with difficulty that the poor secretary had found no occupation since leaving Count Lichtenberg's service. He had turned poet, and this lean profession accounted for his starved appearance and threadbare garments.

He had been in Dresden all this while, watching Lisa from afar ; but the last time she had seen him she had lent him money and he had been unable to return it ; only shame had kept him away. They reproached him with his mistrust, and suggested means for securing him a livelihood, but Paradies scorned any such help. All great poets had starved, he said. After his death, his manuscripts might pay his debts. He confessed, however, that at that moment he had a libretto in his pocket, which he would like to show Josquin. M. Dorioz might accept it, and then, if he composed music for it, and it were accepted by the opera, their fortunes would be made. It would not be the first time that they had shared success.

The friends took Paradies home, and directly after their meal he pulled out his papers. Josquin fumed with impatience, but

Lisa was deeply interested. 'It will take me a couple of hours to read,' Paradies said. 'It is the tragedy of Alcestis. Do you remember, Dorioz, our reading of Greek plays, and our discoveries about Fräulein Vaara? She has been my Alcestis ever since. You must compose music for me.'

'Anything,' said Josquin, 'if you will spare me a reading aloud. What do you think, Lisa, the Count von Plauen would say to Paradies' libretto? I think it must be much too romantic a transcription for the Intendant's classical taste.'

'Those good folks of the terrace concerts would soon make us independent of our Intendant, if they came to the opera,' said Lisa. 'I have been thinking about it all the way home.'

Paradies was preparing to go home when he found that they would not let him read his tragedy; but he turned back to say: 'Dear

friend, let me tell you that I was grieved to hear you sing in that independent way. You risked much by thus condescending.'

'Condescending !' said Lisa. 'Why should we artists never sing to the class to which we belong, but abandon it to serve princes and duchesses ?'

'Go to, Paradies, my first audience was in a washerwoman's parlour. But your music will help mine to reach a more distinguished public !'

And thus snubbed, the author left them ; and Josquin and Elisabetha discussed for a long time the new public that they had discovered that evening on the Elbe terrace.

Now this little incident of Lisa's song in the open-air theatre had great results ; for an idea was started in Josquin's mind of giving concerts for the town, and he worked hard, and that very autumn had advertised performances for every Sunday afternoon. He

had a list of bourgeois patrons ; a hall. Smoking was allowed. Entrance, two groschen.

Hasse only interfered to prevent Lisa herself from performing. The young Court-singer could not be allowed to sing for the benefit of the towns-folk. Yet it was Lisa who had inspired the idea, and without her interest Josquin might not have overcome all the difficulties which came in his way. But the first concert proved attractive. The second was still better attended, and at last the success of the venture was ensured.

Thus Josquin's summer leisure was well employed. Sunday after Sunday he stood up to play in the badly-lighted hall, ringed by a crowd which, desried through an atmosphere of tobacco smoke, looked (we must admit) as undistinguished an assemblage as any country of Europe could present. But this dingy crowd had music in it ; at once

there seemed to spring up an understanding between the young violinist and his audience. Whatever the unsuccessful artist will urge to the contrary, the presence of genius will always make itself felt, though much that is good, only falling short of the best, may be thrown away upon the ignorant. But there *was* genius here, in this young performer whose very presence seemed to challenge dullness and apathy ; and there was good humour among the listeners, and contentment with their money's worth to begin with. Then the satisfaction increased to enthusiasm, and soon it became a sort of devotion that Josquin inspired amongst his homely hearers. Each new attempt to raise their taste was crowned with success ; and they listened with love to Bach, Handel, Haydn, and all the brilliant violin composers of that classical century, as the young player brought forth out of his treasures things new and old.

When the Capellmeister returned to Dresden to find Dorioz thus making his way to popular fame, he did not quite know what attitude it would behove him to take up towards his concerts, but the large mind of the Capellmeisterin grasping immediately the poetry and interest of the situation, was brought to bear upon her husband, and he came, and was delighted to find his own music flatteringly received by this new audience, and from henceforth gave Josquin's popular concerts his blessing. Faustina, too, came, and was enchanted, and came again ; and this was the signal for many others to follow, excited by her *furore* for the young violinist's playing, so that as the autumn advanced, Josquin counted a polite element in his audience, which increased each ime.

As for Lisa, the true originator of these concerts, she came without fail with Regen-

furth. It was to her like going to church with the poor to come and listen to Josquin's violin with this new public, which she envied him : it was her delight while she drank in the singing tones of his playing to watch the musical eyes of some gentle face in the crowd light up, some otherwise commonplace countenance soften, to see the wonder and pleasure as all bent on the player looks of admiration. Then she too would look up at him, give herself up to the pleasure of watching his face, his hands

Dear hands she knew so well,
That sight of them was like to touch of them. . . .

and a yearning would come over her, and she would look no longer, finding that a strange trouble arose to disturb her happiness, and she would feel, in spite of herself, that the pain of longing was the worse for struggling against it; and on such evenings she would become suddenly shy,

and beg Josquin not to accompany her home as usual, but find his supper with other friends.

The summer had thus passed tranquilly, bringing a new sensation to each of our friends: to Lisa—that of a little happiness, to Josquin—peaceful contentment and concentration on his work. Even Lisa, who was usually prone to sad forebodings, looked forward to a winter as happy and as profitable, and Josquin never felt more secure against the longings and distraction that had so often been his bane; he had been composing much, and was writing his first opera, inspired by Paradies' libretto. He thought that he had at last attained some of the steadfast purpose for which he had always envied Lisa, and that it would surely make him achieve some good work. But Josquin's work like his life could be ruled by no other

force but impulse—a poor instinct will you call impulse? a strain of ancestors' blood in our veins, carrying us whither we would not?—nay, something dearer to the higher powers is impulse. Impulse is new birth: and what greater revelation have we received than that we must be born again? Life to each man as he travels through it, brings new ears, new eyes, a new heart: to be born again is to fulfil his nature. So in Josquin, there were depths which had not yet been stirred; he thought himself working securely, but that very work under his hands was to get new power from his new feeling. Life and its simple experience brought the soul into Josquin, and everything that now happened led to this teaching of pain.

One Sunday evening at the end of November, when Dresden was beginning to be full after the return of the fashionable world, and the following concert was an-

nounced to be the last, the young educator of the popular taste had attempted a higher flight than usual, and had included in his programme a concerto of John Sebastian Bach's. Probably, these violin concertos had hardly ever been performed before in Dresden, so tremendous did the technical difficulties appear to almost every player of those juvenile days of art. There was, therefore, a large mixture among the listeners ; not a few of the class for whom reserved seats were invented, and a sprinkling of artists in one corner of the hall. Josquin was standing up circled by the accompanying instruments, half a dozen violoncellos and double basses. Lisa was listening in her place near the green-room door and admiring the player's frank rendering of the concerto, its giant power and swaying motion, when she was surprised to see his cheek flush, his hand seem to lose power—the player altogether

disturbed. What had Josquin suddenly seen to upset him thus ?

Lisa could not from her place see the corner of the hall where sat the Capellmeisterin and the more distinguished part of the audience. But there, between Faustina and an elderly gentleman, who attentively listened to the music, she might have observed a young lady of irresistible beauty and grace, wrapped in a large cloak of black marabout feathers, caressing the sticks of her fan, while her cheeks and eyes betrayed an emotion that her attitude seemed to wish to conceal. Lisa was hidden from the sight of her ; nor would she have observed her much, perhaps, nor traced any analogy between the emotion of the player and that of this lovely lady ; for Lisa knew nothing about Cécile, and Josquin's passion for her. But it was nothing else than her presence, suddenly flashing upon him, that had paralysed him for a moment.

Unexpectedly beholding her, when all his energies were centred in his concerto, he had no time to call to his aid the many fortifying reflections he had been preparing for the occasion for many months—that she was engaged to be married, that she never could be anything to him, that their paths lay in opposite directions ; all such cautious reminders forsook him, and he was all unnerved. But the double basses accompaniment of the concerto swung on uninterruptedly, and he soon recovered himself. As soon as he could, he went into the hall to speak to his late patron, but they had vanished. Only Faustina, calling him to her, said triumphantly : ‘Well, Josquin, you see you are not in his Excellency’s bad books after all ! He has only been two days in Dresden, and he comes to hear you and see this sight,’ pointing to the populace in the hall. ‘He was delighted ! The little one dotes on your

playing! They say they will come back next time!' all this in a crescendo of enthusiasm.

What? they had come back to stay at Dresden, and Count Lichtenberg came to hear him as if nothing had happened to offend him! and Cécile seemed free, was it all a mistake that she was engaged to be married? Rumours had alarmed him, but Faustina would have been told had there been question of a marriage. And there would Cécile be, not three miles off, through the winter; and Josquin might sometimes see her. With what delight did all this pass through his mind at Faustina's words. But when he was back, and alone, at the Klosterhaus, in vain he tried to persuade himself that his delight was the most natural thing in the world; he could not but feel the folly of indulging it. He resolved that at all events he would not seek the family at the villa in any way; and if fate

were not against it, there was no reason why his industrious life should be disturbed. Still, the thought of seeing Cécile again the next Sunday, if the Count kept his promise of returning, filled his thoughts during the following days.

The days seemed long to Josquin, but Lisa did not notice his pre-occupation, and she forgot all about his sudden emotion in the midst of his concerto the previous Sunday evening. She attributed Josquin's care in selecting his programme for the last concert to his wish to end the series well; but he himself was almost ashamed of his anxious choice. He selected for his solo a beautiful romance of Galuppi, which had been a great favourite in Vienna. When the evening came, he was dressed with the greatest care. The last autumn rose from the Klosterhaus garden stuck into his frill, was the only bit of colour in his costume; for his coat and waist-

coat were dark, and with eyes brilliant with his inward excitement (after so many months of quiet, was it not natural that small things should cause great excitement?) the player truly was charming. The quartett beginning the concert was over, and had received its applause ; but still none of the Lichtenberg party had arrived. It was time for the romance, but Josquin delayed. The clavier was opened, and the accompanist waiting ; the people began clapping, Josquin begged him to go upon the platform before him—a few minutes more (he thought) and Cécile might arrive, and for her the romance had been selected, and he could not begin without her. The people began clapping again in impatience. ‘Just take the music and open it on the desk,’ and a minute or two more passed. Lisa sitting in her usual corner, between the platform and the musician’s small private room, could not understand

it. How unlike this was to the unpretending Josquin! 'Will you not go?' she said to him; 'it is so embarrassing—the people are waiting.' 'In a moment,' he said. 'I don't like the position of the music-stand.'

'But you play by heart, Josquin,' said Lisa. Still he waited, but no Cécile appeared. Suddenly Josquin dashed up to the platform, and was greeted with the usual applause. His friend looked after him with a pain at her heart. She could not explain to herself this fussiness, so little belonging to his nature; she felt that there was a danger: a little of the glory had departed that haloed her Josquin. Meanwhile, she could not see all the audience, only the figure of the player. He looked round with a look of weariness on his audience, then began the lovely romance in a business-like manner, which did not please Lisa. She heard a sound of rustling in the hall, and suddenly Josquin grew quite

pale ; then he played on, seeming to recover his composure, and the performance was as good as ever. But when he came back to Lisa, he was trembling with excitement. His eyes shone, and he was absent. He had not thought it possible that Cécile's presence should have such an effect upon him.

Enthusiastic applause now recalled him to the platform, and at the close of the concert again burst forth, and his name was repeatedly called. In the excitement Lisa forgot her annoyance of a few minutes before. She did not think it unnatural that Josquin should hasten forward to greet the Count, his late master, and his lovely niece, before they left the hall, nor did she observe that any further change had passed over him. Josquin had recovered his composure. He returned to the Klosterhaus engaged to go to the Villa on the following day, to play quartetts with the Count, and he went on his way as usual.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT THE VILLA AGAIN.

BUT two months passed away, and Elisabetha knew that a change had come over her summer life. She could not have given an account of the change, but she had gradually felt a distance growing between herself and her only friend ; when had she felt the change that had troubled her happy life with Josquin, how did she know of it, while outwardly their life went on as before ? So she went over the sad heart-searchings. Their work and interests she told herself were the same, and she of the two was the most drawn away by her profession ; it was not strange that Josquin should have far more friends than

herself, more engagements as the season commenced ; that he should be made much of in places of which she knew nothing. She had been prepared for this, but it was not in absences, but in his presence that she most felt that their intercourse was not what it had been.

Who shall say what becomes of friendship when one of two is in love with a third ? who has seen it survive in that rare and subtle thing, friendship between man and woman ? It had been an ardent sympathy that Lisa inspired in Josquin since he came back to find her grown to great power, and yet simple—a woman unlike all others ; a little more, and his feeling had been enough for all the demands of daily life ; but while admiration almost kindled the spark of love ; there on a sudden was the real fire burning in his breast. Cécile had come back, Cécile with all her old power ; Cécile alone made his

pulses beat when she came into the room ; Cécile seemed to him harmony, inspiration ; with her alone could he feel the passionate tenderness which would excite him till he reached that determination which *is* power. And so it was little wonder that Lisa felt lonely, for it had been the history of her stay in Vienna over again with Josquin.

His enthusiastic patron, after discovering the history of his birth as we have seen, had magnanimously forgiven him for leaving his service ; but though the peaceful Count kept his sympathies as much as possibly secret, the Gosparein family did not fail to be offended at his receiving so lightly the idea of having encouraged their scapegrace nephew in his wilful courses. ‘ That Ludovic, he is infatuated,’ said his son’s kinswoman, Charles’s mother. ‘ It is a blessing that my poor niece has enough of her mother’s sound good sense and distinguished taste to be able to withstand

her uncle's theatrical follies !' and when the Count continued to praise Josquin for his talents and good conduct, and Charles persisted in talking about reclaiming him, the family found some comfort in Cécile's scornful indifference and silence about the young musician who seemed to have turned the heads of all his patrons.

And not even Charles, who knew her the best, could have thought that Cécile was not wholly indifferent to his cousin : when her uncle related to her the history of his childhood she said nothing, betrayed no interest ; when later he spoke of wintering at the Villa nothing in her manner could have made him suspect that she was deeply, intensely attracted by the plan. And yet, if it was carried out, if they were now once more in Dresden, if Josquin found himself once more fascinated by the society at the Villa, it was no other influence than that of Cécile von

Lichtenberg. She it was who drew him on now imperceptibly to more and more devotion.

The last described concert ended the course brilliantly, and immediately the Count claimed to have a share in the young man's time, inviting him by day to come and look over with him those dully elegant compositions about which he was more sanguine than ever; in the evenings to all reunions and suppers, to play and make music for his guests as of old. He did not betray any knowledge of his history—acting partly from selfishness, for he was afraid to lose the musician whom he could not replace. Josquin was glad that they treated him as before, but yet he felt that it was not all the same—what a blessed difference it made with Cécile, that she should know his history! More delightful than ever was his intercourse with her and her world. Nothing was said; but often Josquin longed to ask her how much

she knew since she was so kind ? to beg her to dictate to him what he should do—to tell her of his old struggles—of the struggles that still would come up . . . Was it any wonder that he still compared his life with Cécile and his life of work ? Of all this, how could he speak to Lisa ?

Lisa never asked him any questions, but he did not let her be ignorant—that it was the Villa that most attracted him away from the Klosterhaus. If he had told her further, unburdened himself and let her know that he passionately loved the young lady of the house, that he could not bear any life that separated him from her—what would she have thought or wished for him ? It had always been a comfort to Josquin that Lisa accepted him entirely as a fellow-artist ; that, knowing of his birth and history, she yet had always taken as a matter of course that he would keep to the path he had chosen for

himself, and this had been a source of strength to Josquin in good purposes during the past year. Now he shrank from letting her know anything of the struggle, as it arose again in him. Vaguely he feared to lose that familiar intercourse which he felt fostered his best life—the long musical mornings, the meetings after the opera. He would come away from the Villa to hear her sing from his place in the orchestra, and long for the old comfort and repose of their evening talk ; but slowly he too began to feel the penalty that he must pay for his secret intoxication. If she found him pre-occupied and languid, where before he had been eager and absorbed ; if there was a certain impatience in his manner, where before he had been simple and calm, in her too he felt a change. She was excited and eager to fatigue, or sombre and silent, concentrated on her work. Each trusted that the other did not perceive its

own trouble, each strove to let the change be unfelt by the other ; but soon the natural result followed, and while working side by side, they drew farther apart.

One day an invitation came for Lisa with a courteous note from the Count, inviting her to sing at a private concert at the Villa. Her first instinct was to refuse. Though Lisa had never questioned him, she had not been without intense curiosity about the grudging villa and its people ; but she shrank from indulging it now, for it made her feel that she did not trust Josquin, that she had need to spy out what he did not confide in her. But while she held the letter yet before her, Josquin himself had come in dressed—she saw in a moment, to go to the Villa. He entreated her not to refuse. He had so long wished her to know his kind patron and to see the beautiful house. It would be at its gayest for the Prince Valentin, a great

amateur of music who was staying there, and this was one of the entertainments given in his honour. The Hasses were going, they would all go in a party. He entreated her not to refuse.

And then Lisa had relented. ‘But Josquin, what do you think the Count will want me to sing? I should like one of my pieces to be something of yours; that last one you wrote for me, you know—you promised to alter the end,’ and she brought him an unfinished MS. piece. ‘Can you try it now?’

‘I am afraid I am due already at the Villa, but I will find time to do it for you. I am overwhelmed with work. The Count wishes me to put to music the *Comus* of Milton, which he wants to have acted during the Prince’s stay. I have got it all in my head, but it is hard work even to score it in ten days. It is to be performed the night before your concert. Alas! I fear strictly an

amateur performance, but it will be good for all to hear you the following night.'

This had been a fortnight before ; since that Lisa had only received a hurried note from him to say that he had been kept at the Villa ; that they wanted him to stay till the performance was over. He would only have time to get to the opera at night to play (the Count's carriage was to take him in), and not return to the Klosterhaus at all. The week that she had just been going through had then been a week of gloom to Lisa—all the while she thought in her grieved heart that it was for his art's sake that she vexed herself at his disappearance.

The people used to come and ask for Josquin at his door, Regenfurth would report of their dismay at finding the musician away ; messages were coming and going ; pupils furious. Lisa, regularly occupied as she was, yet felt in despair ; she went about

her work with an aching heaviness at her heart. What did it mean, this absence of Josquin? What was he to the Villa now, that they should have such claims upon him? and that he should weakly let them interfere with all his work?

As the evening approached, Lisa's courage for going on her lonely expedition to the gay Villa failed her. Her great longing to discover more of Josquin's hidden life had overcome everything; she had said to herself, when her pride rose up against her eagerness, that if she could expect nothing more of him was not Josquin after all her brother in art; and if it was going all wrong with him while he left his work to compose operettes for amateurs, ought she to shrink from going where he was, where she might perhaps say a word in season—recall him to his true life? But as she sat at her weary toilet preparing to go and meet him at the Villa, the wounded

sense of not being trusted made her (Lisa usually simple and fearless as a little boy) shrink from going where her womanly instinct told her she was not looked for with pleasure by her friend.

And Lisa was not one of those for whom dressing is a joy. As she stood up now in her solitude, and raised her arm to fasten up the hair which she wore unpowdered and unconfined in the morning, she looked as if she had stepped out of a noble Michael Angelo world, too unconventional for the society for which she must prepare. When dressed, she looked less well, for the fashion of the time, with its hundred graceful conceits, did not suit her massive figure. Not like another lady who was seated meanwhile at her toilet preparing for the same society, heaping on the subtleties of a tumbled rose and careless ribbon, 'bugle, bracelet, necklace, amber;' from which little scented paradise of

elegance she will presently shine forth to make the hearts of men rejoice and of women tremble. This was at the Villa, where Josquin had been staying the past week, and where all was festivity in honour of the arrival of the Prince, whose stay was interrupted once before by the siege. There was an unusual solemnity about the reception of the guest ; there were faint rumours of a match contemplated between him and Fräulein von Lichtenberg. Josquin had often heard such, but it was now Cécile's own manner which made him anxious and miserable. When the Count had asked him to stay, he had told Cécile that it would be better for him to remain at work in the town ; but she surprised him by her emotion. Her face was quite pale as she looked up at him imploringly :

‘ Will you stay away ? you do not know all that I have to go through this week—all

the stiffness will be unendurable without you—and your music.'

'What is there I would not do for you,' he said; 'what greater happiness can I have than to be asked to remain by you?'

'Yes, for this week,' she answered hurriedly, as if afraid of having said too much. 'I have so many to think of—such a part to play;' and then in a low voice she added, 'it is such a luxury to have somebody near with whom one may be oneself.'

Cécile would say these things with a far-off look, half sad, half hard, which made her face irresistible. She would madden Josquin with impatience, for at one moment she would seem to give herself to him, the next she would make him feel that he had ventured too far.

'One week, and then starvation! Tell me to stay for ever, or else to remain away,' he burst forth.

‘Josquin, you do not know what you are talking about. I am not your life; your work, you have told me, is your life; your whole calling is between us—you must be a great man.’

But she had never called him by his Christian name before. ‘Cécile! Cécile!’ he exclaimed, ‘I am ready to give up everything for you, but why should such good things as work and music part us? I believe that you give me sometimes your best self, why do you give me so little of it?’

‘Be grateful and content!’ she laughed scornfully. ‘You do not know how small a proportion is that good in me to the bad. I do not want you to think me good. All will be over on the day that you ask me to give you more than I do now.’

She was once more the imperious Cécile, before whom Josquin was less weak—before the gentle one he had no courage. ‘I will

stay, madam,' he answered, 'to make music for you, and for your guests.'

But during Josquin's visit, when Cécile let him look into her sweet eyes, he could feel only a defiant happiness. If the Prince indeed aspired to her hand, his nature must needs have been phlegmatic ; for she had not a blush or a smile for him. Josquin over and over again thought of writing to Charles to come and help him. Lisa might well be heavy hearted. It was the last night of his stay, the opera had been performed in the private theatre on the preceding evening, but he had not found one moment wherein to come for her to bring her to the Villa. The Capellmeister however called, and they gloomily drove out together. 'Why was Josquin dangling on at the Count's?' Hasse said ; 'What was the use of his being fine gentleman one day, composer and artist the next?' 'Could Lisa tell him how the opera

was getting on ?' Lisa used to answer for Josquin, but now she was all in the dark about him : her heart was full, this night she trusted to bring him back, make him tell her all.

At last they reached the Villa, and were graciously received by the Count at the door of the beautiful music-room ; the listeners seated there had access to the galleries of the house ; so that there was a coming and going between the pieces that took away all stiffness from the concert. The Vaara's song, however, was anxiously waited for ; and a silence greeted her entrance, as the Count conducted her to the harpsichord. It was Hasse who sat down to accompany her, and wearily Lisa's eyes sought Josquin. Was it not he who had made her come there ? Was it not he himself who had wished to bring her ? and now he was not even there to receive her. Soon she knew

that he was not in the room. Happily for Lisa, her art was a pure region with which she little allowed her own troubles to interfere. Now her habitual conscientiousness came to her aid, and with a burning heart she sang so that those who knew her style could only have found a little coldness to reproach her with, while all praised her large and poetical expression. She was encored, and giving in to the Count's instructions, accompanied herself in one of her northern ballads ; and then the Capellmeister had moved away, and she sat alone, while a celebrated tenor took his turn for performing.

‘Ah ! I have reached you at last, Fräulein !’ said a well-known lisping voice beside her. ‘I was in the Japanese boudoir, driven away by sheer fatigue from the music, when your divine tones reached me. I assure you, you are the one being who shows me that I still care for music ; all the rest make me feel

that either I or the world is gone mad, out of tune. You inspire, harmonise me.'

It was Count von Plauen. *He* had been called to the music-room by her voice. Was it then that Josquin had not been at the Villa at all that he was so far out of its reach? How wearily did poor Lisa now force herself to listen to the Hof Intendant's endless *propos* about his adventures, his new musical ideas, his relaxed throat! This man had no more nature or spontaneity under his palpitating flowered waistcoat, than his music had reality under its artificial pretension. If he had but a very little sympathy or understanding, poor Lisa, in her loneliness, would almost have been grateful for his praise. It was only because she could endure no longer to sit still whilst longing to satisfy herself that Josquin was really not at the Villa, that she accepted the Intendant's offer of his arm to conduct her through the rooms. He led her out of the

pretty vaulted music-hall into the gallery ; but amongst the gay crowds of people there, admiring the Count's Italian collections, she could not see Josquin. Her eyes sought him everywhere among the statues, which he himself had so often described to her.

At that moment the Count came up with a magnificent young man, smiling and curled, with arching eyebrows and white teeth, to whom he presented von Plauen. Then turning to Lisa graciously, he said : ' Fräulein, I am glad to see you well taken care of. I was just going to show his Highness some Japanese curiosities with which I have had my niece's boudoir fitted. Count von Plauen, will you lead the Fräulein, and follow us ? ' and his Excellency led the way to Cécile's apartments, where he had already sent some people in to look at the Japanese treasures. And then Lisa entering, beheld Josquin ! He was dressed in a pink silk coat ; by his side

was Fräulein von Lichtenberg. Ah! what was the strange brilliancy in his eyes, the flush on his cheek? She, too, looked excited. They seemed little pleased at having their retreat invaded.

A few hours ago Lisa had assured herself that it was because she feared for her friend's work—for his career—that she wanted to meet him, and bring him back from the Villa. Face to face with him at that moment, was it for his music she cared, was it her interest in his art that made her suffer such pangs and burnings of heart? Von Plauen led her straight into the room, where the scent and colour of Oriental stuffs, of barbaric jars and the soft light of lanterns, made a luxurious surrounding to the couple. He was standing up by the side of the lady on the sofa, as if he had been disturbed there. Josquin looked older. There was an intense look about his face. This was no ordinary flirtation Lisa,

unlearned as she was in such things, told herself.

Lichtenberg also seemed surprised to see Josquin, but the latter was silent, attempting no excuse for being there with his niece. His manner was absent as he greeted Lisa, but he pressed her hand kindly. As for the bland young Prince, he was not at all disconcerted. He went up to the couple, saying that he had been looking for an opportunity all the evening of asking for the romance that had enchanted them all the night before. Would Cécile sing it, and M. Dorioz play the accompaniment?

‘It was impossible for that night,’ Cécile said; ‘there were too many strangers for her to sing. It was out of the question.’

‘Sing the romance, my child, since the Prince wishes it,’ said Count Lichtenberg gravely. ‘You have no reason to be timid.’

At this moment, who should emerge from a

small chinese-pagoda, where she had been discouraging, hidden from Lisa's view, but Faustina in her best brocade. The Doctor was faithfully in attendance, and one or two others of the party who had intruded on Fräulein von Lichtenberg's retreat.

‘Ah! my dear, do sing that lovely romance!’ Faustina said. ‘Hasse ought to hear it, for he wasn't at the play last night. It will delight everybody.’

‘Oh! before you, dear Frau Capellmeisterin, it is impossible!’ said Cécile, looking infinitely bored.

‘What nonsense, my duchess! Before Faustina you can only not say No. You sang it to perfection, and it does my old ears good!’

Here Count von Plauen joined in the entreaty and several others; but it was no use for Lichtenberg to look vexed, nor for the greatest singer of Europe to implore.

The lady sat on, letting herself be pressed, when with great affability, the young Prince offered her a sky-blue arm, with a smile which he seemed to think must be irresistible. Cécile did not conceal her annoyance at the whole intrusion, but she rose to take the proffered arm, only saying languidly :

‘ The Prince will lead me to the music-room, but I cannot sing to-night. I am tired, and the crowd is too great. Fräulein Vaara will, no doubt, sing for you as much as you like ! ’

And the look in her eyes was as hard as the diamond that flashed in her bosom, while she turned quickly to the woman whom she pierced with her words. Faustina flounced back into the pagoda furious : Count Lichtenberg turned impatiently to lead Lisa to the music-room to end a scene which had vexed him. For Lisa this request to sing was a command ; was she there for anything else ?

They all passed into the concert-room again. His Highness sat down next to Cécile near the harpsichord, von Plauen alone was waiting upon the young singer, who wanted an accompanist, when suddenly Josquin came forward to her as if aroused from his dreaming, and asked if she had brought the piece he had forgotten to arrange for her. When she reminded him that it was unfinished yet, he whispered : ‘ Lisa, kind sister, forgive me ; I don’t know what I have been about.’ Lisa could see that he was very much excited, and it almost touched her for all the want of confidence he had shown her. She got through her song, and then the Capellmeister came up to Josquin : ‘ Oh, volatile son of a French woman, what have you been doing here ? composing an operetta, I hear : have you had enough cakes and ale yet ? don’t waste your time any more, but come home to work, Sir ; come home with me.’

‘Yes, Master, I return home to-morrow, but I have not been quite idle, I assure you ; the production of an operetta and rehearsing in one week, is hard work.’

A good supper had been putting Hasse into a more favourable humour than that he had indulged during his drive with poor Lisa. ‘Aye, aye, let me hear some of your work ; they tell me of a good romance. Can’t I hear it before going to bed ? Lisa, I am tired, will you soon be ready ?’

Lisa was watching Josquin and listening eagerly : was it that he wanted to please his master, or that he was glad of an excuse for approaching Cécile where she sat beside the Prince ? He went across and whispered to her to sing. He only seemed to say very few words, but to the surprise of all who had heard her persistently refuse her uncle, the Prince, and Faustina, Fräulein von Lichtenberg rose and allowed the young violinist to

lead her to the harpsichord. To Lisa it was no wonder if she sang for him if for no other. He blew out the lights, for they wanted no music, and seated himself to play for her the accompaniment of the pretty romance that had given so much pleasure the night before.

It was but a small performance, but Lisa listened with throbbing heart to the high delicate voice of this *belle dame sans merci* spiriting away the heart of her musician while she sang. Everybody praised composer and singer together. 'Has she not twenty admirers that she should claim the heart of my only friend?' Lisa bitterly thought; and her heart felt sick, and she could bear the stifling atmosphere no longer; and while all crowded round Cécile, she trusted to get out unobserved. But it was vain to try: von Plauen was at her side; she was helpless, and she let him lead her out to the

gallery and open its farthest window for her. 'What can I fetch you?' the assiduous Count was asking, and Lisa, longing for one moment of solitude before going back to the hall, asked him to fetch her a glass of wine and water. Then she gratefully remained alone, looking out on the terraces and calm gardens beyond all bathed in bright moonlight. In that moment she heard quick steps in the gallery behind her, but the door was shut and all was silent.

Lisa was standing at the very door where one April morning, years ago, Josquin had waited for his new master and had stepped out on the terrace and down the stone steps into the little apple-tree garden outside Cécile von Lichtenberg's windows, and there for the first time had seen his love: but Lisa did not know how near she was to Cécile's sanctum. She too thought the little garden lovely, even with its winter trees, and the

peaceful frosty sky calmed her, and welcoming the cold air she leaned out into the night.

It was only a minute she stood, but some strange fate had brought her there to suffer. Suddenly a door opened ; below in the little walled garden, footsteps on the path ; Josquin and Cécile were there, both pale in the moonlight, she wrapped in a large fur cloak. Theirs had been the steps in the gallery : they seemed to have come to say farewell here. What do people do when they say good-bye ? they were silent in a long embrace ; and Lisa could hear their voices clearly through the frosty air.

‘Cécile, is this a last kiss ! Dearest, sweetest, you are trembling, what will you have of me ? Hasse presses me to go to-night, your uncle seems to wish it—shall I go ? Speak ! I love you madly, Cécile ! help me ! help me !’

Cécile's voice answering, trembled strangely.

'Yes, Josquin, be calm ; I implore you for it is best you should go to-night. See, I have shown them all that I love you ! let that be enough !—go at once. My uncle will be coming to say good-night. I said I was retiring for rest. You will be missed. For Heaven's sake, Josquin, do not let me be found here with you.'

Lisa heard no more, for Von Plauen had returned with the glass of water. For all the passion and anger at her heart she would not betray Josquin to *this* enemy ! She came forward to meet him. A few minutes afterwards she was sitting upright, stiff and dark, in the Hasse carriage, driving away in silence, opposite the Capellmeister and his wife, through the clear moonlight.

And Josquin was still in Cécile's garden. He could no longer obey her strange capri-

cious dictates, when, after showing before all the world that she loved him, she told him to go. If she returned his love there was no call for parting : he was ready to sacrifice all for such a dream. ‘ My Cécile may I leave all for you ? ’ he said ; ‘ I will give up my profession, I will go to my uncle ; with your sweet love to plead he will help.’ But she was vehement in her prayers that he would do nothing rash. ‘ Josquin, only let us know that we love each other. Don’t let us risk anything ; such moments as these are so precious and so rare. We can look forward to them, and so be consoled in absence.’

‘ But Cécile, I cannot live like this—it has been possible one week. How can I go back to the old life ? While I remain a poor artist, I am not acting rightly in coming to your uncle’s house on false pretences. *He* receives me only as his Kammer-Musikus. I come because I love *you* ! Cécile, if you

let me, I will put an end to all this by trying to win your hand.'

She trembled violently on his arm, and her face suddenly changed in the moonlight.

'No, Josquin, I entreat you, spare me this—I have tried to spare you but you will not understand me. Why do you speak of marriage? You put an end to all our dream. Marriage is for the world, Josquin—do you not know—have you not seen that in the world I belong to——'

'To me Cecile! it is you have made me bold; you have not concealed your love. . . .'

'But *that* is not marriage amongst us! I must tell you the truth but must it bring parting? Will you cease to love me? . . .'

but here there was a sound in the house behind them and she looked up frightened, and hurriedly faltered out :

'Oh Josquin—this evening in that room—

the formal betrothal—they will be coming to look for us—my uncle and this prince. . . .’

Josquin let the arm hang that had clasped and supported her. She clung to a railing for support, as she turned to go into the house.

‘Josquin, I was right. I am still right. You are a musician, you have been my love. You could not be my husband. I *dare* not stay now; my uncle is coming to call me to him. . . . Good-bye.’

‘For God’s sake, Cécile, come back! tell me it is not true!’ Josquin cried out, as she turned away.

‘Josquin, forgive! be merciful! hide yourself!’ she said, turning back her white face imploringly. ‘I hear my uncle! Good-bye.’

There were lights inside her apartment, shining through the curtains. Josquin’s first impulse was to rush into the house, and tell how he had been betrayed—tell the Prince

that he too was betrayed! *She would belong to him before the world!*

Josquin stood there for long, stunned at first by the truth—the cruel disillusion. Then a great hatred of the place suddenly seized him, and he rushed away, cold and shivering after the fever and excitement of the evening, unable to control himself, weeping passionately for very pity and anger, when he thought of his miserable love. The blow which had dashed his whole illusion to the ground had come so suddenly that the reaction against his happiness of an hour ago was horrible. He threw himself on the road-side and wept till his very senses were dulled, and he still lay in the wide noontide of the bright night, when every sound had died away round the house, till it seemed to him he could hear, in the awful stillness and brightness, the pulses of great Nature beat as his own beat with wild fruitless throbs. Then,

lying in a strange wrought-up state, it seemed to him that from it all a soothing harmony arose, voices in the night, and in his own soul a voice ; one thing alone in the wide world beckoned to him, his music, his neglected work. He thought of Alcestis ; and he rose up again impelled by the force of an inspiration to rush home and write. The silent streets spoke the same ideas. Josquin barely knew that he was running through them, instinctively seeking the Kloster-haus, where he was most used to work. The old house lay white and silent. Lisa's window was white. Josquin thought, will she, my Alcestis, ever know pain like mine ?

Lisa was staring at the white square of moonlight that lay upon her floor : her heart was going over and over again its sad questionings. Was it then for this Josquin left his profession, his purpose, his friendship with her ? just for a little elegance, a little loveliness,

a little grace and refinement? perhaps, after all, these were the most desirable things in all the world, and in Cécile Josquin found them, and with her he found all misunderstood. Josquin was that night still at the Villa and to-morrow would he have returned, and for how long, and where was the use of wishing to keep him where his heart was not? As Lisa mused thus, suddenly there came cutting sharp through the frosty air the cry of a violin. Startled, she raised herself and listened: the player seemed to be fighting with a very demon within him, for he drew chords upon chords in wildest harmonies from its strings; then suddenly overcoming, he burst into a loud impassioned melody that went to Lisa's very heart. 'Josquin, poor Josquin! What are you doing?' She went to her window, there was the light in his room, he had come back! was this his

serenade good-night to Cécile? The great burst of melody had opened Lisa's full heart before too burning to let her weep. The light was gone from Josquin's window, the music had ceased, but she wept for long in sympathy. And then Josquin's soul had received comfort, and he was sleeping, and before morning Lisa too slept with a relieved heart.

PART II.



We learn in sorrow what we teach in song.—SHELLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BREAD OF TEARS.

THERE is a picture by Caracci in the Dresden Gallery which poetically illustrates the words of the serene Goethe—

Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Der kennt euch nicht, Ihr himmlische Mächte.

It represents St. Francis, exhausted and languishing after long humiliation, being supported by the heavenly music of a consoling angel. And it has seemed to me that the robust young immortal, with his earthly brown violin, is not an unfit image of Josquin's muse at this time, who came to cheer him with new inspirations and mysterious beatings of heart.

‘Yes, Lisa,’ he exclaimed, the day after his return from the Villa, when he told her for the first time of his old struggle because of Cécile, of his sudden call to leave her and return to music, of her coming again in softness and kindness to renew all his passion, of his rude disillusion—‘It seems as if I had ever been in love with two mistresses, and my life has failed miserably, because it has been impossible to serve both—my music and her whom I have loved as a first love.’

He had opened all his heart to Lisa, but it was she herself who had come to find him with outstretched hands, following an irresistible impulse the morning after hearing his violin in the night. She had then drunk the dregs of her cup in her self-humiliation at her own hopeless fancy and bitter jealousy ; but at her waking the next morning all these feelings had vanished, she had guessed his pain, and in that moment she had felt that all estrange-

ment was at an end between them. 'Oh Josquin, it was good, it was beautiful what I heard last night; it has told me so much, will you not tell me all?' she came to him saying: and when he had ended all his confession of his life, with its *two* loves, to which she was only third, she received it calmly and only said: 'We will talk no more about Cécile, but I am glad you have told me all; we will talk only of music. You will live for it now, Josquin.' 'To *this* rival Lisa did not grudge him.

A note had come that morning to make him realise what had happened the night before, what had seemed a dream at his waking. It was from Lichtenberg.

The Count addressed his favourite with the first cold words he had ever given him; his feeling seemed to be completely changed by what had happened. Once he had warned Josquin against the indulgence of any senti-

ment while under his roof; he had not concealed from the musician that his high-flown enthusiasm stopped short at any of life's real romance, and now to his strange dislike of the absorbing passion of love was joined a little jealousy; he believed that all these years Josquin had remained with him for his niece's sake and not his own, and suspicion and mistrust made all his affection disappear.

Her marriage with Valentin was after his own heart; calm, lofty and refined, was the feeling Cécile inspired in the Prince's heart—thus he wrote to Josquin. The wedding was not to take place for three months, on account of the approaching death of the Prince's father, whose wishes had brought about his son's engagement. His Excellence regretted the delay, and added that though they would remain at the Villa till the time of the marriage, he wished to be as quiet there as

possible in the interval ; they would have no music, and he begged Josquin to consider the present note a farewell for some months.

Thus did Josquin find himself shut out in the cold from a world of delight and agreeable intercourse, and thus did the heavenly messenger come to cheer him in his poverty when deprived of all most precious to him. Very poor without this visitor would the musician have been ; besides, the cruel wound to be healed only by time, besides sentimental griefs, there were other small miseries coming hardly to the most mercurial spirit ; with the muse, there were other cruel visitors equally prone to take up their abode with the young and beautiful—Poverty, selling his chairs and tables (for he had been spending largely of late, and his first quarter's salary for playing in the orchestra was not due yet, and when it came it would go in paying his summer debts, and

only through the porter's good-will did Josquin keep terms at all with his landlord); and one still more dread—Illness, making all existence, however hard, appear beautiful. But happily of this unthought-of danger he was little conscious, though it had been discovered by a kind friend who at this time began to take an active interest in him.

This was the courtly Doctor, whom we have seen picking the young violinist up on the road to Dresden. He had heard his praises from Faustina, had come to see him, and, delighted with his playing, had made him perform at his house. The Doctor told him to take care of himself, not to work too much, or play too much; but he saw that the young man took it all lightly, besides that, he wanted something more than good advice.

The Capellmeisterin told him all she knew of his life and youth. He was quite

penetrated with this history of devotion to art, told him, we may believe, by Faustina, in her most picturesque fashion, and finding that his endeavours to help him himself were useless, he bethought him of the rich merchant princes in Vienna, for whose life of ease and luxury the musician had exchanged his present life, and wondered whether now in his distress they would be persuaded to come to his help. When he spoke, however, of it to Josquin, the suggestion seemed to torment him. 'The time is past now,' he had said. 'If I was to have turned back from the plough, it would have been long ago; now, at least, I am free from the thought of all those probabilities. What you suggest would be clipping my wings, Doctor, when I have once escaped from the broken net.'

The bland Doctor, however, was accustomed to act for his patients; he knew all their secrets; he seemed to have the ends

of all the tangled threads of the little life around in his hands, to know where they combined, and twist and work them according to his discretion—all the while with the kindly smile in his beard, that seemed so magically to inspire confidence. He now thought of Cécile, and determined to make her the instrument of help to Josquin. He went out to the Villa, and found the lady choosing some wonderful Indian shawls to be thrown into her husband's wedding present. At Josquin's name she grew a little pale, and her lips quivered when the Doctor gave his description. 'Why doesn't he come to us?' she said, 'my uncle would help him. Ah! Doctor, there are no secrets from you; but I was not to blame. What could I do but be kind? I did not think he would take me to be so in earnest.'

'My lovely child, you have learnt your lesson. You had once a fine instrument,

which you did not know at first how to play on. You neglected it till you learnt the secret of its sweetness, then you used it just to please yourself, as you would have done any other, and it broke. It remains silent, and you will not again meet with such a one.'

The tears filled her eyes, but she said impatiently : ' Oh ! it is all a mistake, your romance and sentiment ! One day I found I liked my uncle's favourite player.' Suppose I had made him give up his profession, or run away with him, and as suddenly found out that I got tired of him ? No, Doctor, *c'est bon pour le peuple !* we in our life, are not meant to have hearts,' and she looked at her shawls with dried eyes.

When the Doctor, however, asked her to do something for Josquin, by appealing to her uncle, or to his people in Vienna, on his behalf, she laughed at the suggestion. ' You

do not know my uncle, I dare not speak to him ; but I can go to the good Fräulein von Gasparein—M. Dorioz shall have an allowance—he must not want. Then he shall come and play at my house. . . . After all, he always preferred music to me.’

She composed an exquisite French note to Brigitta von Gasparein, appealing to the romantic heart of the most hopeful of Josquin’s aunts. She knew that the good lady loved to display sensibility. She drew a touching picture of Josquin’s misery ; and, warming in her description, she dwelt so much on the likelihood of his returning to his family, in the hour of his weakness, that the note might have been read as a message from the nephew, confessing that he was ready to throw himself at his uncle’s feet.

Oh, Josquin ! pouring out in your quiet chamber the expression of all your want and pain ! What would you have said to this

pink and white composition? What, still more, to the reply it elicited? Fräulein von Gasperein thanked her niece a few days after, for her beautiful letter, and assured her that when she arrived in Dresden for her marriage, she would make a point of visiting the prodigal in the hour of his repentance, and of herself administering to his needs.

Unconscious however of the visit preparing for him, and with doctor advising above, and landlord threatening below, Josquin worked on consoled by his muse; and the fancies visited him as they used in the old days of boyhood, and they found him matured by the experience of his years of training, so that new harmonies every day seemed to become possible to him, and the work which was the child of many fitful impulses and changing moods of passion, was completed with life, and vigour, and inspiration.

Lisa used to wonder at the strange ex

citement that seemed to succeed his moment of apathy. She was only thankful to have him working by her side, perhaps if she had seen Josquin's mother in her last days, and recognised poor Nanine's colour and last expression she would have been more anxious. His eyes were bright and earnest, and the eager looks he turned on her were not called out by her, she knew; some inner power seemed to feed them. Was it still Cécile? or was it only the work, the progress of which she saw with such interest? She felt sure that it was good and beautiful; it might mean Cécile—it would overcome Cécile! and very near was its success to her heart. To Josquin her praise of his opera was very valuable, and her judgment was all the more precious to him because it had often before differed from his.

But Josquin was to receive another powerful source of encouragement at this

time to cheer him on, and to buoy up his hopes. His opera was finished six weeks after his last visit to the Villa, and he then took it to the master of whose help he could now make tolerably sure. It was ever since his tour with Count Lichtenberg that Hasse had openly recognised his pupil's power; his vanity had then been constantly flattered by receiving the compliments of the various masters of Germany and Italy, who praised Josquin's talent, and these praises softened his prejudice, till he saw that the composer would contribute to his glory as much as Elisabetha did by her singing. The young man had been loyal to him, and the master so needed support that he forgot any jealousy that might have mingled with his feelings of the old days. Still his pupil had not altogether satisfied him since his return, and he still lamented over his tendency to depart from the most orthodox models.

Josquin therefore knew beforehand pretty well what his master would say, and stood behind his chair, with difficulty restraining his impatience, while he looked over the last act of the opera, accompanying his reading with such remarks as : ‘ Well, well, what have we here ? An Aria do you call it ? nothing but accompaniment. You young men spoil all by your pig-headed scorn of your unfortunate primadonnas ; but I can tell you you will not get many to sing this accompaniment of the voice to the flute—and here, what a scramble have you got your violins into, *accelerando al forte* ; yes, plenty of fire and faggot we know you can give us, but what does this scoring mean ? ’ and dashing the book down on the harpsichord, he began playing it frantically. ‘ Lord have mercy on us, hark to those fifths. Very well, and here it ends. What ! No *Da Capo* ? ’ Josquin, vexed and nervous, begged the Capellmeister at last

to let him play over the last part himself. Hasse flung himself back after his last outburst and let him do as he liked, and the young man sat down and went through it, rather singing explanations than speaking them. All the while he played a voice occasionally came through the doors of Hasse's stuffy sanctum, a voice calling a shrill 'Bravo, benissimo!' The master, who began to calm down, and praise, sternly ignored it, but the player could only be inspired by it, and he got excited over his work; and when he had ended Hasse exclaimed generously and warmly: 'My boy, this is a fine work. I have never doubted your genius; keep it for some years and bring back to it all the experience that you will gain in that time, and meanwhile compose another . . .' But at that moment he was interrupted, for the door was shut to, and Faustina, in her morning deshabelle, with flying hair, beamed forward.

‘My good soul, what are you talking about? A few years! In a few years where may we all be? and you put off the reaping of such a harvest to your successors? We have here a second Gluck—a bright star in our old age! I know not if it lacks experience; I know that it speaks to my soul. Come, play that over again.’ And as Josquin played, she herself joined in with her shrill but noble old tones. ‘Spoiling the man, as usual, Faustina; you are mad,’ Hasse grumbled; but when she had left them he spoke gently to Josquin. ‘It is for your own interest I want you to lay it by; times are hard, opinions changing so fast that one doesn’t know what may be called for next; but you know my position, Josquin—who would think now that I once commanded the whole taste of the court?—and you know the Intendant. Unless public opinion were strong enough to influence him in your case, I think you would have more chance with a more

conventional work ; but if you wish this now to be offered to him, I will promise you all my interest.'

How could Josquin consent to put this on one side for a more conventional work ? This had been the greatest inspiration of his life, and he had a right to believe in it. While he paused to answer, Faustina mysteriously called her husband out of the room, and a few minutes after returned alone with a sparkle in her eyes. 'My boy, you stay to breakfast with us, just as you are. I have sent Hasse in to talk to a friend I have been receiving. It has been a reconciliation, after a sad misunderstanding of some years. It is all going on beautifully. You see, at my age, I cannot afford to lose a friend for the sake of old jealousies. And such a friend ! Come and see him presently. I take no refusal. Rest here half an hour, and then make yourself look your very best in Hasse's looking-glass,

and come and join us ;' and she vanished. And Josquin, fatigued and excited, did not consider much for whom he had been told to make himself look nice, and wondered what answer he had best give Hasse.

When he came into Faustina's salon, the stranger was engaged in earnest conversation with the husband and wife. 'Here is our young genius,' she said ; but she introduced him thus without naming the guest, and taking his arm, went in first to the repast, and left her husband and Josquin to follow.

The stranger was middle-aged, calm, and lofty, but simple in his appearance. His dress was plain, but every detail showed a courtly elegance. The lace of his ruffles fell over large perfectly-shaped hands. A smile lit up his countenance when his mouth remained uncurved. He seemed, indeed, to look down, with a serenity that bespoke the divinest mood, on a fussy world,

without vanity, untouched by its little-nesses, filled only with the beauty of life. 'What was his rank? what was the height from which he looked down on them all?' Josquin asked himself, as he gazed on the stranger, fascinated as he had never been before. Was he some prince who transformed the world into an earthly paradise, or only some ambassador, who had acquired this dignified repose in courts? Faustina sat next him, with her brown eyes sparkling. She was dressed in her best, and was bringing out all the treasures of her memory and bright wit, and affectionately poured out her heart in every glance to the distinguished guest. She made Josquin talk too, and even Hasse caught the infection of her vivacity, and conversed and clinked glasses festively.

When breakfast was over, Faustina said : 'And now, chevalier, you shall hear our young genius. He left Vienna just as you

came last year ;' and she began to undo the fastenings of the violin-case.

'I have heard of M. Dorioz there,' the stranger answered ; and he took up his violin and examined it. 'That instrument alone is enough to make you a great musician. It is not everyone who deserves such a treasure. I expect something of you.'

But Josquin was not at ease. Suddenly he became shy in the presence of this man, whose loftiness of tone made him wonder.

'What is the matter, Josquin ?' said Faustina. 'Sharpen our appetite, my boy, with some delicious roulades, and then play all you know.'

Even the bland stranger seemed to observe that his hands trembled, and he said kindly :

'Perhaps the player wants to be tuned as well as the fiddle ; let me play you something first.' And he sat down to the clavichord and spread his large beautiful white hands on the

keys. He played a short prelude, looking at Faustina with a sweet placid smile; then he took up the violin, and handed it to Josquin. The young man seemed compelled to obey, and he began immediately to take the theme of what the stranger had played, and executed the most charming variations on it. He seemed to lose his shyness, and become excited over the difficult performance, till at length he ended with a *prestissimo*, making his hearers smile by his excitement.

‘Bravo! I should like to have done that myself,’ exclaimed the stranger. ‘You have a superb talent. Now I will show you something of *my* best. Tell me how you like this Romance.’

And he began playing and singing, with delicious dreaminess, a divine smooth air, which transported his hearers. ‘Capellmeisterin!’ suddenly exclaimed Josquin. ‘Tell me, that I am not mistaken! It is the Ritter

Gluck !' He was greatly excited, and stood up with his eyes shining and his lips trembling uncontrollably.

' Ah, Ritter !' cried out Faustina, ' this is better than the praise of an old woman—better than that of courts, is it not ? You have here a disciple !'

The master smiled calmly and kindly on the two. ' M. Dorioz is one of us,' he said ; ' his playing shows me a fresh intelligence of unusual power, and I must see his music.'

' Yes, you shall see a fine work he has just finished,' began Faustina ; but her husband interrupted severely from the other end of the room.

' Dorioz had far better not show his *Alcestis* for some days, till it is perfected.'

' *Alcestis* ?' said Gluck ; ' that is a subject of which I have often thought. Porpora has written a ponderous *Alcestis*, Martini a flip-pant *Alcestis*. Let me see what this bright young soul has made of his opera. No,

Capellmeister, no delay. Let him bring it to us at once.'

'It is already here,' said Faustina. 'You shall take it home with you.'

Josquin returned home that morning with beating heart. He threw himself in his chair, and looking round on his little room, felt, for the first time for many days, a delightful sensation of relief and quietness of heart. In his lonely chamber his beloved score had been his companion for weeks. He had lived in it, not thinking of success or failure, only giving himself up to the joy of seeing it grow under a blessed impulse. Now it had gone forth into the world, his work was done. His opera was in the hands of the divine chevalier. He felt that he should sleep well after the many nights that he had been kept awake by the excitement of production ; and all night the gracious presence of the great master hovered about his bed, and his dreams were pervaded by the smile of Gluck.

CHAPTER II.

AUNT BRIGITTA TO THE RESCUE.

WHILE Josquin was thus being consoled, Lisa's peace was once more disturbed by a trouble that daily threatened it more. Since Josquin's confession to her, their life had gone as before ; and as she saw him returning to their mutual interests, and their art which linked them together, she satisfied herself that she asked for nothing more than to know him working by her side ; and she would have been calm and almost happy but for the shadow which crossed her way wherever she turned. It was that of Count von Plauen, whose increasing devotion to her was already being discussed in the

Dresden world, who attributed various meanings to this new fancy of the extravagant Hof-Intendant's. It created wonder, because although Lisa had many admirers, and was quite the rage of the musical world, she had gained the reputation of severity from the few who knew her, of prudery from her theatrical rivals, and of insensibility from the lovely gentlemen in silk and powder who sent her notes that she did not answer, and bouquets that she left in the green-room. Some said that he only paid her attentions in order to gain the help of her talents for his own compositions; others wondered at his having such an admiration for her singing, seeing that her taste was so widely different from his own. Those who admired her most thought it only natural that the Vaara's strange power and northern beauty should have charms for him that opposition only heightened.

And Lisa wondered, too, at the infatuation which made von Plauen overlook all her impatience and scorn. She reproached herself for that one evening at the Villa, when she had almost gratefully accepted the support of his arm. Bitterly she thought of the all-powerfulness of the man at the opera, which made it impossible for her to dismiss him scornfully and finally from her life and her thoughts. But every moment she was reminded that not only for herself would a break from him be fatal, but for Josquin ; that the time had come when it was woe to him if he found no favour in the Hof-Intendant's eyes.

All alone Lisa tried to resolve the problem. There was no one with whom she could take natural counsel. The tender but blank Regenfurth had a life's devotion ready to give her dearest charge, and a tear always ready to fall from her left eye ; but her imagination did not stretch far enough to suggest

that anything might alter things from the way they had already happened, or were going to happen, and her conversation chiefly consisted in repeating Lisa's last words in an interrogative tone. Yet if she had been a more open-minded old lady, she would not so well have suited her sensitive charge; and as it was, her affection, her goodness of heart, and charity thinking no evil, shed a sort of soft moonlight over the young singer's existence. Regenfurth hoped all things Lisa hoped, believed all things Lisa told her, and was ignorant of all things; and yet no change in the girl's aspect escaped her. She saw with sorrow that her sombre, abstracted moods seemed to increase upon her; that she would sit for hours giving herself up to some gloomy reflection, till her work called her to rouse herself. Then she would rise with effort indeed, but the exercise of her art seemed always to give her strength and delight, and

she brought to it more power than ever in the hours of reaction. At these performances von Plauen was always present.

Lisa persistently refused any of his offers of introduction, and avoided as much as possible being seen in the same places as himself. But just about the time of the finishing of Josquin's opera, when he was about to take it to Hasse, she received an invitation from the Intendant to sing at a fête, which he wrote to tell her he had organised expressly for her. Hasse, whom she requested to refuse for her, had entreated her to accept. Lisa in despair had told herself that it was no use to struggle against the Intendant when she came professionally in contact with him. At the end of the season she would try to leave Dresden for some years. She would all the while do all she could to turn his favour to good use for Josquin. So she

consented to take part in a performance which was quite in the taste of the time.

The Count received his guests in a large *jardin d'hiver*, or immense conservatory, for the opening of which he had composed a Cantata. In it the author himself appeared as Archimagus, invoking all the spirits of the air, earth and sea; in turn they all appeared to him, a wondrous procession of beasts, a chorus of trilling nightingales, a fountain suddenly springing from a cool grotto appearing where had only been trellised walls, discovering nymphs, tritons blowing through their horns, and sea-monsters braying in tune. All these delights appeared before the enchanted audience; and then, to the sound of soft music, von Plauen's Muse was disclosed amid dark laurels, and came forward to crown the poet. The whole performance was a surprise to Lisa. She had been requested only to appear draped amid

the trees, and sing what von Plauen had sent her. She had thought it only the Intendant's unnecessary pedantry that had made him elaborate every detail of her dress and gesture in the rehearsal, which she went through as quickly and indifferently as possible. When the evening came, she was in her place before the other performers, and then below, in the garden, saw the wonderful spectacle von Plauen had prepared; and when she herself came forward with the laurel crown in her hand, found that she was crowning him amid the applause of all. Faustina was there, and Hasse, and with them the great chevalier. Von Plauen looked round to introduce Lisa to him, but she was gone.

In great anger she returned home, praying that she might not have many such sacrifices to make for the sake of Josquin's success.

It was the morning after that he came happily to tell her of his meeting with the Chevalier Gluck. He knew nothing of the performance at Count von Plauen's, only that Lisa was going there the day before. He found her somewhat dishevelled, but her golden hair made sunshine in the room ; and if she seemed to him nervous and excited, was it not with the effort she had been making for his sake the night before ? The two friends were no longer boy and girl together, affording to quarrel, taking lightly the little rubs of life. Those who live by art—the quick, impressionable ones—live quickly ; and both, still so young, seemed to have reached the time when emotions are a strong tide below the surface. Josquin had not lost the old radiance, but he was less impetuous, more reticent. He was often grave now. And she had changed in a different way ; her childhood had been spent in dreams ; life's

realities seemed to bring her an irritability which was the cost of her earnest way of looking at things. She was restless; and though Josquin felt more and more the nobility and dignity of her character, her stormy moods were oppressive to him sometimes, and with the greatest difficulty he controlled himself. Coming now to her, full of the bright impression left by his meeting with the chevalier, he would have liked to reproduce the impression for her when he told her of Hasse's kind promise, Faustina's praise, Gluck's judgment coming in a day or two, and of the chevalier's charm and greatness. But she was strangely excited, asked questions before he had time to tell his story; and at last, when he told her about Gluck, seemed only to seize the idea that Josquin had better try and bring out his work in Vienna, under the great composer's patronage.

‘Lisa, have we worked so long together

without your knowing what a different thing that would be for me? Without you to sing in my opera, how much it would lose! Besides, now that the Capellmeister promises to help me. . . .’

She did not seem to hear what he was saying, only sat gazing sadly before her, as if she followed a weary train of ideas. He spoke again, only with an impatient wish to change the subject.

‘You were last night at Count von Plauen’s. What took place there?’

She started, for he seemed to be reading what she was thinking, and she dreaded his guessing any of her forebodings.

‘Yes, Josquin, I sang there. Was it not natural that he should engage me for his Cantata? Why do you ask? What have you been hearing about it?’

‘Nothing at all; I only knew you were going. Faustina said something about it yesterday, and I did not like to hear her say

that *you* could do anything you pleased for my success. Forgive me, dearest sister, but I would rather not have heard of your being there from Faustina.'

Lisa rose ; tears, the first he had ever seen her shed, were in her eyes. She strove to hide them, but suddenly burst out : ' Ah ! Josquin, you do not know the sting of an older woman's words : you should not have spoken thus.'

'What have I said ? forgive me !' he exclaimed. ' Lisa, dearest sister, you are over-tired ; you are doing too much.'

He had himself become pale. An extreme sensibility cannot support any manifestation of agitation in another, and Josquin soon left her to Regenfurth's care ; and for some days he almost shrank from seeing her again.

During those days he waited patiently for further news from Hasse, but he feared to

hope too much. At last he received a summons from the Capellmeister, to hear good news. The Chevalier Gluck had returned the score of the opera, speaking in words, golden to Josquin, of his pleasure in the good work; adding to the kindest criticism a few marks of his own pen, carefully crossing the MS., and expressing his conviction that the pupil would add to the master's glory, for he had an uncommon genius. Here, then, was a giant's praise to buoy up Josquin's hopes, and new encouragement; for he sent a kind message, hoping that he should see the young composer in Vienna, where he would be glad at any time to help him on. Hasse was greatly delighted. He made Josquin leave his score with him, that he might present it at his discretion to the Hof-Intendant.

All joyfully Josquin was returning to the Kloster-haus, and making straight for Lisa's

door. In seeking her at once, he did not even remember the slight shadow that had come between him and her when they had spoken of von Plauen, and his mind rested in happy satisfaction never further from the disagreeable thoughts that generally greeted him at the porter's door—landlords, relatives, doctors, Hof-Intendants—when, coming past the lodge, he was accosted by the inevitable porter, pouring out in one breath: ‘M. Dorioz ! M. Dorioz ! it is no use your looking up to heaven as you pass my door. Speak I must, by order of the Herr Propriétaire, who this very day was here to order the change in your domicile, that I have been obliged to warn you of. M. Dorioz, listen ; it is no use for you to pretend you are in a hurry. I have something very important to tell you. Who do you think was here at the very time to save your apartment ? None other than the lady who came in the smart coach you see at

the door ; she asked me questions about you, called you her nephew, and actually paid your rent for the last quarter. Ah ! M. Dorioz, I thought you would listen. See, her coach is still at the door !’

‘ Called me her nephew ? My aunt ? Why, blockhead, didn’t you say I was out ? ’

‘ I did, M. Dorioz, but she said she would wait. Besides, when she has paid your rent ! But it isn’t the end of my story. Who do you think was here, calling on the Fräulein Vaara, at the time of the arrival of your respected aunt. . . . ’

Josquin raged ; he would listen no more. ‘ Hold your stupid gossip. If the lady has chosen to wait, you are a fool for letting anyone in in my absence. Now,’ he said, ‘ she can wait longer.’

‘ M. Dorioz, hear me ! ’ said the porter ; but he was gone. He was determined, what-

ever the mystery was, first to have his happy minute in pouring into Lisa's ear the words of Gluck's letter ; and he sprang across the court, and rang the tinkling bell at her door. The next moment it was opened brusquely, and Josquin was nearly overturned by a man hastily passing out, pulling his hat over his eyes. Josquin recognised the Count von Plauen. What did it mean, his pale face, the angry look he threw on the young man ? 'Canaille !' he said to his face, and he was gone !

'Oh, cruel fate !' Josquin exclaimed to himself ; for in a moment it seemed to flash on him that this hatred of the man he depended on, was—jealousy. But he had passed into the ante-chamber—a sort of courier-servant waited there. He opened the door of Lisa's apartment—there was a strong smell of patchouli pervading it. O, prodigy ! Opposite Lisa, reclining in her usual corner,

her face speaking awful tragedies, sat upright in her chair an old lady in elegant morning costume; her hair straining up to meet the high head-dress that had been fashionable twenty years before, her eyebrows arching, her slim foot pointing — it was his Aunt Brigitta, looking like a point of exclamation before her tragic hostess. Heavens! what could the two women have been saying to each other, Josquin thought, hardly able to keep himself from exploding, for all his bewilderment of the last few minutes; but he bowed low, not forgetting manners, and said, ‘My aunt! this is a surprise.’

‘Do I speak to my nephew?’ the old lady said, rising with an alacrity which spoke her intense relief at the interruption of her *tête-à-tête*. ‘This my naughty, naughty nephew?’ and she astonished Josquin by embracing him playfully on the cheek.

But this playfulness was in truth a sort

of armour, that the poor lady buckled on in the embarrassing situation in which she was placed. She had come, as the reader knows, expecting from Cécile's letter to find the prodigal nephew repentant in a garret, ready in the hour of poverty to return to the right paths. The porter, acting upon this sentiment, had already managed to secure his rent immediately ; but already the good lady had begun to be undeceived. Lisa had so completely taken away her breath, that she was greatly relieved by Josquin's appearance and manner ; and having come against the prejudice of her sister, she wished not to be triumphed over by them, but to return with the scapegrace, whatever his frame of mind. She therefore began in a conciliating way :

‘ I do not wonder, my nephew, that you are surprised to see me. Eleven years you have let pass without giving your family any encouragement to pity you ; but I have

waited patiently, you see, and am here at the hour of your sore need.'

'My good aunt, I have just heard of your generosity; but I assure you that I stand in no need. . . . I must repay you when . . .'

'No, no; a little bird told me of your wants, and on my way from the baths of Teplitz I determined to come and see for myself—indeed, Josquin, all the ladies seem to *raffoler* of you. Cécile von Lichtenberg is full of your misfortunes; and this lady here, from whom I came to hear about you . . .'

Josquin's aunt drew herself up concentrated and frigid as she turned to Lisa. With one glance at the latter, he determined to carry off his aunt. Lisa was pale and terrible, and he could bear this conversation no longer in her presence.

'Will you not let me conduct you to my room, my aunt? We shall talk better there than here; pray take my arm.'

The old lady seemed nothing loth to depart, and Josquin handed her down with a politeness worthy of some courtly ancestor. Between the dismay at his heart, and this pyramid of millinery on his arm, and the slippery stairs, the manœuvre did him credit, especially as the curiosity of the inhabitants added to his perplexities. Old Ida the singer, brushing her only evening silk on the landing behind her door, peeped out with a leer ; while Anchio, the young painter, who was coming upstairs with a frothing pot of beer for his model's lunch, called her on to the landing to see one of Dorioz's aristocratic relations. Josquin could feel the poor lady's thin arm tremble as she swept up her skirts, while passing the grinning lady in the turban of a Sybil.

‘ My good aunt, how unfortunate that I should have nothing prepared for you. . . . Mind the step before the door. . . . Ah ! I

warned you too late. I hope your train has not suffered. Get out, you impudent fool!’ This Josquin exclaimed to the wag Anchio, who slyly pinched his leg as he turned the corner of the staircase.

‘Do you not think it were better, my aunt, for us to have our conversation at your house at once? I fear my apartment is not ready for a visitor. Let me put you into your coach.’

Poor Fräulein von Gasparein was only too thankful to enter her respectable coach; and having descended the stairs again, jumped in as if she had been a girl of seventeen.

‘Will you wait one moment till I follow you?’ Josquin said; and he dashed up to his own room, and looked at himself in the glass. His *jabot* was soiled; he hastily put on another. He changed his coat, and adjusted his pigtail. ‘I will refuse all charity,

and must not look the pauper I am,' he said to himself. 'Oh, Cécile! Cécile! this too, then, you have not spared me!'

Then he sprang down again without heeding old Ida, who stood mysteriously beckoning him in to ask questions; and jumped into the coach, which rolled out of the Kloster-haus yard.

Lisa heard it go with relief as she sat on, with her head sunk on her bosom, the look of anger and fear only intensified on her face, the sight of which had made Josquin carry off his Aunt in order to spare her any further strain. This was what had taken place. That morning Regenfurth had been laid up with a cold, and Lisa was preparing warm drinks, and taking care of her with the overpowering zeal which she showed when doing anything for those she loved, when Count von Plauen had come. It was the hour when she usually saw people on business from the theatre,

almost the only time that he could get admitted; to find her alone, therefore, was an agreeable surprise. This man of the world felt strangely at his ease by Lisa's peaceful little fireside. At the theatre, when she sang, she seemed to have a magnetic power for him; but when he came to find the simple and grave, almost child-like woman, in her own home, her beauty fascinated him even more; and he was all the more jealous of the feeling, because he knew it was the best he had ever known. He shut his eyes to her coldness, as he now sat on, waiting only a word from her to declare all his passion to her.

An hour had passed thus, and Lisa had already become weary with the effort of keeping the Hof-Intendant at his usual distance—it was always her hope that she should be able to prevent him from coming to any formal declaration—when the entrance

of Fräulein von Gasparein interrupted their *tête-à-tête*. Von Plauen, mortified at Lisa's manner to him, had seemed determined to wait her departure. The old lady entered unconsciously upon the pair, shedding a delicate perfume all around her as she sat down, posing herself to impress the distinguished stranger with the idea of the benevolence and condescension which had brought her to visit the young singer, and of her own distinction and respectability.

‘Could the Fräulein Vaara give her particulars about her nephew Josquin Dorioz, whom she believed to be in distressing circumstances, owing to his own wilful folly? She understood that the Fräulein had seen him continually since he first came to Dresden, and was indeed his greatest friend.’

Lisa did not see von Plauen's face darken at these words. She did not immediately calculate the danger there was in

them for Josquin ; she only sat gazing at his aunt, wondering what his horror would be at her coming, and how she could best spare him her importunity. Meanwhile the poor lady's curiosity began to be somewhat tempered by alarm as she found herself seated opposite the girl whose great eyes looked out upon her from under their stormy brows, while she received her *propos* with an awful silence. Her questions became more and more incoherent. What was the time of day that she was most likely to find her nephew ? Might he not at that moment be seeking his aunts in the town ? Was it not true, then, that he longed to have an opportunity of returning to his family ? He had found out his folly in following the musical profession ? He was ruined and despairing ?

When in reply to all these questions Lisa more and more warmly assured the aunt that her nephew was never more absorbed in

his profession, never less anxious to be disturbed in it ; that he was always at home now, working, when he was not busy at his profession, as at that moment with the Capellmeister ; that his uneasy circumstances were not likely to last—with every fresh disappointing answer Fräulein von Gasperein got more and more excited.

‘What, was this the truth ? Then she had misplaced her charity. She repented her generosity in having paid Josquin’s rent ; the porter should keep the money for himself. She should have nothing more to do with her abandoned nephew.’

‘Oh yes,’ said Lisa, forgetting all caution ; ‘help him with your world’s good ; he has little of that ; but do not expect him to give up his profession for it. If you knew how hard he works, what a life of self-sacrifice he has led, you would wish to help him ; you would have your reward in the performance

of a duty. He has been a sort of brother to me ; his success is very dear to me !’

‘ Brother, indeed !’ the old lady exclaimed, losing all her composure. ‘ Ah, I cannot be the dupe of your assurances. I see it all now ; the falsehood of them, the truth of Cécile’s appeal. It is *you*, young lady, who have kept our nephew from us all these years ; it is now because he is entangled in *your* meshes that he does not come to seek us ; and though starving and ready to leave you, he yet is kept back by your machinations ! Ah, indeed, this devotion to his profession ; now it is clear what it means ! Oh Sir !’ she said, turning with the air of making a pathetic appeal to von Plauen, ‘ imagine my distress and that of my distinguished family. We have a dear nephew, who for years has given us no sign ; has left an honourable career for the life of a mere bohemian. We had found it useless, as long

as he was successful, to try and bring him back to us. Now that he has brought himself to destitution by his dissipation, I believe him to be willing to throw himself upon us. I fly to his aid ; this lady tells me that he is prosperous, that he is still wedded to his profession, what am I to infer ? . . . can you advise me ?’

‘My good lady,’ von Plauen said, rising, quite pale, but with a cruel smile on his lips, ‘my advice to you is to give help of a substantial kind to your nephew, while you can, if you do not want him to perish with hunger or to live on the kindness of those whom he is fortunate enough to number among his friends. . . . I have good reason for telling you that I do not think it probable that he will ever be in a better position than he is now, though I believe, while throwing himself on your bounty, he yet hopes to achieve success in his profession.’

Then he departed, meeting the unlucky Josquin, as we have seen, upon the staircase ; and before Lisa and Fräulein von Gasparein had time to exchange another word, the young man had come in.

CHAPTER III.

A GOOD-BYE.

So Josquin had guessed rightly the meaning of von Plauen's sudden movement of passion towards him that morning, and as he drove away by the side of his aunt he had gloomy reflections enough to make him absent, while the lady talked unconscious of his abstraction. Fräulein von Gasparein was romantic and vague. She was also very much afraid of her elder sister; and though she felt that she ought to be sounding the depths of her nephew's mind with the phrases she had made beforehand, calculated to impress his softened heart, she could only find expressions

of astonishment at the unconventional manner and appearance of his chosen friend. 'My poor boy! your father, I know, always had a predilection for singers—even dancers, but *this* woman, with her *farouche* air, her strange figure, *absolument sans cerceau*,' she said, sorrowfully shaking her head, 'makes me think that even in your tastes for the fair sex you young men of the present are sadly degenerate.'

Josquin thought it wise to turn the conversation to the baths of Saxony, which his aunts had been visiting, and soon they drove up to the door of the Gasthaus. As he followed her up the steps, he cursed his folly for having run into this purgatory. But he was under a debt of gratitude for his paid rent. It was better to be polite for half an hour, and have done. His aunt said they returned to Vienna in a fortnight.

But within that time they would assist at

Cécile's wedding. Josquin hardly realised to himself how he longed to have news of her.

Just before entering the house Aunt Brigitta paused. She looked terribly perplexed. 'My dear young man, you *are* sorry not to have been with us all this while? You will try to please my sisters? They are less indulgent than I But come, come, you are charming.' She then pulled Josquin winningly by the sleeve, and they entered the apartment the ladies occupied.

It was a white panelled room, the ceiling heavily decorated with arabesques. Between the long dreary windows hung a high green-coloured glass. The tall candlesticks, ready on the table, looked conscious of being the best in the house; even the snuffers had that air of respectability that the properties of the best rooms in a family inn always possess. In the centre of the polished oaken floor sat Josquin's married aunt and Crescentia, in

their usual afternoon composure. The latter looked just a little more faded. That was the only change he could see, and the pervading smell of *maréchale* and the long piece of work of which each lady held an end in her tambour frame, brought a tired remembrance to his brain of fusty sprigs, that had begun to shoot in green and yellow floss silk in the Vienna drawing-room ten years before. Outside, the sun was shining in the gardens. There were divine pictures for who would look at them ; music for who would listen ; life was progressing ; people thinking new things. Here the afternoon seemed to be shut out—life to have stopped. Dingy fustiness, complacency, and dullness—these things made Josquin shiver.

The ladies scanned their nephew with great surprise. What could be the idea formed in their mind of his career during the past ten years ? I think, if you had taken

away the mysterious horror of the unknown that veiled his profession, you would have found that it ranked with ideas of pick-pockets, hair-dressers, and atheists. They had disapproved of Brigitta's rash project of seeking out herself the prodigal; but now that they saw her successfully bring him back as they thought, to throw himself at their feet, they were quite thrown out of their count by the penitent's graceful mien, and unsubdued manner. Agathe found his easy politeness quite out of place, but Crescentia glowed with a furtive pleasure at having her fingers kissed by this very remarkable-looking young man; and Brigitta, restored after the vexations of the Klosterhaus episode, and more emboldened, said to herself, while she watched him making his bows, 'But he is quite distinguished, he has quite the *bel air*;' and altogether was radiant at the success of her own persuasive powers. The young musi-

cian stood up in the midst of this group, turning from one to the other with his quick restless movements, to answer their questions.

‘Yes, he had spent some months in Vienna, at the time they were away. He came back to Dresden because he found he worked best there. He had always lived in the same house ; it suited his means. He was not very well off, but looked for better days coming. His time was very much occupied ; four times a week he played in the orchestra.’ Here the ladies lifted their eyes to the ceiling, but proceeded severely with their interrogatory. And Josquin took delight in describing his artist’s life to them ; how he hoped to have new popular concerts in the summer ; how he hoped to make a regular income by giving lessons and composing. His greatest friend, he said, was the young singer Lisa Vaara ; his greatest delight his violin,

which brought him a little money and many friends. Josquin answered all with perfect politeness ; but his aunt Agathe at last left the questioning to be carried on by Crescencia, and, after sitting silent some minutes, spoke sternly ;

‘ Brigitta, this is not the time for such trifling ; you have brought our nephew back to us on false pretences. The question is now whether Alexander, in seeking our help, wishes to conform his life to right ideas, or whether he comes to throw himself upon us, taking advantage of your weak kindness ? We have not been able to see him all these years because of the profession he has chosen ; the question now is whether he is prepared to change it ? If unsatisfactorily answered, he forfeits all claim on our notice.’

‘ But, my dear, we must try indulgence. We must see what a little kindness . . .’ Brigitta began feebly ; but Josquin broke in with :

‘Madam, I ask for no indulgence; I want no help. There has been some mistake, and you are romancing, my good aunt. Charles will have told you long ago how little idea I have of conforming my life to your notions. When I was in Vienna, on your own ground, I could not have come in this way to you; but here I am at home, and you are strangers, and I offer you my services. I could not let my aunt return alone, after kindly taking the trouble of coming to see me. In the world of my own choosing, madam, I have not unlearned good manners, and I trust that you will never find me wanting. I am here to wait upon you, but not to ask any favour.’

Agathe only gazed sternly at the poor offending Brigitta during this speech. Crescentia began to weep; but the conciliating aunt still tried to make the best of the situation, ready to argue that a little of her

society might wean Josquin from the evil influences of Lisa.

‘It was Cécile von Lichtenberg who deceived us about him, you know, Agathe. We thought his health was broken, his fortunes shattered ; but we will allow him to be useful to us. To-morrow we wish to visit the Porcelain Gallery ; he might accompany us.’

‘Yes, he will make our stay agreeable,’ said Crescentia brightening. ‘The day after we might visit the Tame Tortoises ; after that . . .’

The light of the afternoon was getting greyer. The lines of the three faces bent upon him seemed to deepen. ‘Heavens !’ when will this sickening comedy be over ?’ Josquin exclaimed inwardly in despair, when, through the door, suddenly he caught the sound of a voice speaking in the vestibule—high treble music that filled his soul with trouble—and in another minute Cécile

entered, radiant in a hat and cloak carelessly thrown on ; her voice and laugh coming showering into the room before her—it was a way she had when she was happy.

‘My aunts, I have come for you all—all three, and will hear of no excuses. How are you all?’ then, suddenly perceiving Josquin, she drew in, but seemed to try and speak naturally. ‘Ah, M. Dorioz, I heard that you were ill ; how are you ? . . . So, my aunts, you have not lost much time in finding him out.’ It seemed to Josquin that while she spoke lightly her eyes fell upon him with pity, and the beautiful lips trembled. The aunts sat looking on very severely, for it was Cécile who had brought them into the embarrassing position with their nephew ; but she continued : ‘I come from my uncle with invitations for the ball at the Brühl palace to-night. He says I am to take no excuses. The carriage is at the door, if you

have any shopping to do, any toilettes to get, I can take you wherever you like ; there is plenty of time.'

This proposal put the ladies into such a flutter of excitement, that nothing else could be thought of at the moment. There was so much to be said, however, before the offer was accepted ; and, while they discussed the question in all its bearings, and Cécile argued and persuaded, and talked about horses waiting, best shops for purchasing, engagements for Monday, engagements for Sunday, with the three hard faces bent round her, Josquin contemplated her, and his heart was filled with bitterness. The women amongst whom she stood, beautiful and noble, seemed to him types of the narrow, poor life, to which hitherto he could never believe she really belonged ; there was a terrible *likeness* to be traced between the features of the débonnaire and egotistical Brigitta, and those of her niece

—he seemed to see Cécile old, hard, absorbed in this life which she had chosen, which robbed her of life, robbed him of all sweetness in regretting—these were the dregs of his cup.

He was roused by the ladies rising to prepare for their drive. It seemed a happy opportunity for departing hastily, for they were far too much pre-occupied to think of making any farther appointment; and Josquin took leave, merely bowing to Cécile, to whom he had not said a word. But he had not left the stairs of the house when he paused: an overwhelming emotion made him stop. An inexpressible longing came over him to say one word to Cécile in farewell, this last time he should ever see her as Cécile von Lichtenberg. She had done him a great wrong, only a minute ago his eyes had been opened to see her without illusion, but he felt that that could not be the end. As he had left the room, the ladies had been filing

out of it—she would be alone. In a moment he dashed up the stairs, and telling the servant at the door that he had left his hat, he re-entered the room where Cécile waited alone. He went and stood up before her. He saw that she was frightened and troubled by his manner, and his coming. ‘Only for a moment, Cécile, have I come to trouble you,’ he said. ‘Do you know that we have parted for ever, and that we have not said good-bye?’

‘Auf wiedersehn!’ she whispered, pale and moved, looking up almost imploringly to him. ‘Go, go, quickly, auf wiedersehn!’

‘No, it is good-bye, and I *must* speak what is in my heart.’

‘Oh, why do you choose this moment? Why are you so stern? They told me that you were ill, poor . . . I wanted to help you. . . .’

He seized both her hands, and held them

while he spoke. 'Oh, Cécile, I have read pity in your eyes; I have seen that you think to give me pity instead of love, and see! I lonely, poor, and shut out, have found the same in my heart for you. Yes, when you did not know it, I watched you. I have seen you smiling at the opera, I have seen you go by laughing—they all tell me you are happy; and in your eyes I read your scorn of all that I imagined once you needed for happiness; but I know you yet better than all others. I see you as you really are—in all your pride and beauty I see you poor and cold, my love—colder, more unhappy than I . . . even than I,' and the tears would come, and his voice was choked, so sudden and uncontrollable was his emotion. He felt that he was not master of himself. All his old tenderness for the woman whose hands he held came back to him, and she

too, for the moment, seemed unable to resist him.

‘ Ah, Josquin, you must forget—you must think it all a part of the dream. I am not really fitted for you. How could I have entered your life? I should only have impeded you!’

‘ No, Cécile, have I not confessed to you my love in moments when I have looked into your soul? I saw nothing there that would impede me, as you say. But that is all past. Only, now I pray you for one thing : in looking back on what has been, to remember that with me you were your real self—the self that you have been false to ; oh, Cécile, be true to yourself, to me, in remembering.’

Then he went impetuously as he had come, and a minute after the three ladies entered prepared for their drive, and found Cécile sitting as they had left her.

And not till late in the evening did

Josquin return to the Klosterhaus, for in his uncontrollable excitement he felt that he could not come again to Lisa ; and he sought the quiet avenues of the public gardens, and paced up and down, impelled by his feverish mood. It was not inspired wholly by his meeting with Cécile, or his anger against von Plauen after his painful meeting ; it was an undefined impatience with life, appearing to him then in all its strange unfulfilment ; life with its infinite hopes held out to every new soul, and its dull limits ; its confused opportunities teaching to each its cruel contradiction. Then there came before him too that artificial life of the world, undoing what nature would do, causing half the contradiction.

Beethoven talks about the 'world's rabble,' in his outpourings to her for whom, in the world's biographies, a tender place is reserved—Bettine who consoled Beethoven ;

and every artist will understand Josquin's intolerance—for him, the world's rabble is the one outside his art.

Not till he returned home did Josquin recall the pleasantness of the first part of the day, and that he had not yet told Lisa of the letter from Gluck ; but now he felt it to be impossible. He could only guess from von Plauen's anger and Lisa's look, that some new offence had been given him ; and if the Hof-intendant were offended, of what use would it be for her to know that Gluck had praised his music ?

He was right in guessing that Lisa also would rather be alone that evening. She too had been spending hours of misery ; but the one conclusion she could bring to her comfort was, that Josquin must never know anything of her dread about von Plauen, and that from henceforth she must make up her mind to their paths being better separated.

CHAPTER IV.

CHECK !

AFTER this, there followed a fortnight of suspense ; for the opera on which concentrated now Josquin's hopes was in the hands of the Capellmeister to present to the Intendant, and there was nothing to be done but to await their answer. It was a time of supreme bitterness. Heine has said, ' He who loves unhappily for the first time is a god ; ' and Josquin had tasted of this divine unhappiness when strung up to compose his opera he had felt the poetical side of pain. Now, he was left with all that belongs to the gloomy side of the artist's life ; all the things that bring

life down to its harshest resolution. The angel of consoling inspirations seemed to have fled ; he had no courage left to begin new work ; and when thus unoccupied the thought of Cécile would ever come back to him, accompanied by that vision of leanness and barrenness which had impressed itself on him during his visit to his aunts, which chilled belief, robbed life of all its sweetness. Every morning brought him nearer to hearing the fate of his opera ; every morning to Cécile's marriage bells.

Lisa told him not a word of her interview with von Plauen, nor did he let her know of their encounter on the staircase after it ; but each knew the other's dread ; and Lisa dared not buoy up his hopes. The Capellmeister was the most cheerful, and Josquin sought him often ; Faustina was full of sympathy ; and not only she, but other humble friends observed him with affectionate

concern. One day that he entered his restaurant, contrary to his usual habit, at its most crowded dinner-time, the remarks that were made upon his appearance did not escape him; many of his professional acquaintances were seated at the small tables, but he went to one at the end of the room alone. Here, however, he did not escape the open gaze of Colophonius, Bleikopf and the young Swiss flute-player Tötli, who, between cheerful friendliness and voracity were making their meal hideous.

‘Good Gad! look at Dorioz! what a scarecrow!’ said Colophonius the violoncellist.

‘By Jove, it spoils one’s appetite to look at him!’ said Bleikopf.

‘Oh, that is what we come to when we live only with the companionship of tragedy queens. They say,’ Colophonius went on, ‘that the Vaara has the very devil of a temper at times, and he calls her his sister.’

‘I can well believe in that temper,’ said Tötli, feebly ; ‘at the last rehearsal my flute was a little sharp, and she glowered upon me like a tiger.’

At the opposite end of the room where the company was more distinguished, Anchio Schmidt was dining with Ferrimpetto, first trombone of the opera, and Peissner who had composed more than one libretto for the Sassone himself. Here the fumes of tobacco were less thick, and each table had its bottle with long neck. Anchio had that very evening been treating his friend to a description of Josquin Dorioz’ progress down the staircase of his house, with his fashionable aunt on his arm, when our hero appeared.

‘This high life does not seem to agree with him, poor devil,’ said Peissner, observing Josquin drop wearily into his seat, and order his soup and common bottle of

wine. 'No, this won't do,' said the painter ; 'I have never known Dorioz proud for all his aristocratic acquaintance ; he must be very much down not to want to be cheered by us. We never see his face now, and he used to be such a capital dog at a kneip. Let's ask him to join us now—'

But Ferrimpetto, the stout man, prevented him and looked serious. 'Poor fellow, he wants rest, don't worry him. I tell you what ; it is his play as well as his work that is wearing him out. His work is in one world, his play in a quite other ; and it is killing work to keep pace with both. I knew the struggle once when Mrs. Ferrimpetto came to the rescue—Ah ! what do I not owe that angel ! This poor boy we shan't have long amongst us,' and leaning over the table, he said : 'The other day I observed him in the orchestra put his handkerchief to his mouth after coughing, and as he drew it away I

watched him. I did not see what he saw—but only a sudden paleness on his face, as if he had received the touch of a certain cold, skin and bone gentleman on his shoulder.' Ferrimpetto was a stout bass, much given to trope and metaphor, but after speaking he cleared his throat energetically and then ordered the girl who waited on them to refill and exchange the decanter of the gentleman who dined alone with wine of a superior bottle.

The girl obeyed with a pleasant smile, and when Josquin found out the change, she pretended ignorance ; but after the three men had gone out, she told him with such kindly sympathy in her blue eyes, that his heart felt soft, and he would have liked to press the child's brown hand to his lips, and tell her some of his heart's heaviness. He had overheard some of Ferrimpetto's words. 'All composers now-a-days spit blood,'

Anchio had said, but the other had shaken his head.

Was that to be then the end of all his disappointments, his dreads, his ecstatic hopes? Josquin asked as he left the café, but he felt a strange quiet and unconcern. The soft air of the early spring, the pleasant lengthening light, the good wine he had drunk, made his blood run more kindly than it had done all day; and, as with pulses tranquillised he walked slowly towards home, he began recalling books that he had read, that had before made him wonder about death, and curiously enough he recalled the German translation of Phædo, long ago given him by Paradies at the Villa, though he had not thought of it since. He remembered his delight at the expression, *the soul is a harmony*; and also his sympathy with the disciples of Socrates when the master smilingly suspects them of fearing

death, lest 'when the soul leaves the body, the wind may rudely blow her, and scatter her away ; and, especially, if a man should happen to die in windy weather, and not when the sky is calm.' Josquin smiled now, and remembered that he too had always felt he should like to die under a calm.

He looked into the book when he came in. He had once asked Paradies to give it to him since the scholar could read it in the original. The grey-faced secretary had grumbled at parting with it, but had at last written Josquin's name in curling feeble characters in it. The book opened at this passage, faintly marked in pencil : 'In the course of my life I have had intimations that I should make music before I die. The dream came to me sometimes in one form, sometimes in another, but always saying the same words. "Make and cultivate music," said the dream.' Long ago he had put the

little pencil-mark before those words when Paradies had been complaining, and life had seemed empty at the Villa ; he had longed then to rise above Paradies, to find all happiness in working and achieving ; now a great indifference took hold of him, and the peaceful thought of the great life of the old Greek, and of Gluck his master, and his own little life, in however infinitely small a degree, adding to and helping the great harmony of the world.

He fell asleep, still reading at his window ; then suddenly woke chilled. His thought turned to Cécile once more, and he was troubled ; and when he lay on his bed, his peace was gone ; he tossed from one wild dream to another—his reading, the words of Ferrimpetto, Cécile, all mixed in confusion in his brain. At last it seemed to him that he could bear his restlessness no longer. He rose and went out to seek the house where Cécile

lay that night—the last before her marriage day. He thought he took his violin and went along the moonlit streets, as on that day when he and Lisa sang the serenade for Faustina. He wanted to sing it to Cécile, but the white and black gables were all so like each other, he could not find the house. He sought Cécile's window in vain, and then he tried to sing and play his serenade and its accompaniment at once. He could not sing, his voice was harsh and hoarse ; his fingers were numb, he could not play. He wept bitterly, and shrieked out at last in horrible discords. Suddenly a figure came behind, and began to put in the bass ; and the serenade and its accompaniment came to him again, and Josquin sang, not daring to turn and see whose was the shadow. He waited till it was over, then he saw that it was Death. —the horrible image of the Italian's words.

With a shriek he awoke, and spent out the night in misery.

The next morning the sun rose cloudless on Cécile von ^{Lichtenberg} Gasparein's wedding morning. But what have we to do with it, since she has passed out of our musician's life? And what is the wedding to us, with its sunshine, and its organ peals and solemn mass, and beautiful bride in the glory of brocade and pearls, stepping down the Hof Kirche steps, at the head of the procession which has long since tripped into Hades? We can think only of him who sits still in his lonely room, too miserable to rise up: a few only wondered not to see him there, and he had indeed intended to be present. He had felt that it would be best for him to go, that he could not be made more unhappy than he was; and then, that very morning, another blow had fallen, and he now lay on his bed bewildered, stunned, vacantly staring above. By his side

lay the large MS. score, returned by the Direction of the Opera ; and there too a letter—it was in so delicate a hand-writing, and on such dainty paper that it was difficult for Josquin, before he opened it, to be prepared for its contents. It was from Faustina, who wrote in a passion. Hasse never touched pen and ink. The Capellmeister had had the score returned him with excuses from the Sur-intendant of the Opera. He had sent it, and pressed it again without telling Josquin, finding the excuses unreasonable ; it had again come back with a final and arbitrary refusal. It was clear, Faustina wrote, that von Plauen was at the bottom of it, that he hated her husband, and attacked him through his pupil's works ; Josquin must leave Dresden—they must all go. Would he not come at once to her, that she might show him how she loved and appreciated him—all the more for the cruelty of others ?

When Josquin tried to get up at once and answer this, he could find nothing, everything in his room seemed to have changed its place. His head was dizzy, and he found it useless to attempt to walk across the room. At last, with failing sight, he traced a few lines :

‘Dear Mëisterin,—A sight of you would indeed be good for these sore eyes this morning, but I must put off coming . . . a cold . . . a bad night . . . something has made me faint and weak. This is a cruel blow, but we must wait. *In the course of my life I have always had intimations that I should make music before I die* . . . JOSQUIN.’

When Faustina received this letter, the tears came into her eyes ; she questioned the porter’s wife who brought it, and when the woman declared that she believed M. Dorioz to be very ill, though he had said that he wanted nothing, the angelic lady said she

must go at once ; she called for her shawl, her chair, her small medicine chest—and soon after arrived at the Klosterhaus. It was the hour when even the first floor's scales were hushed by the hour of dinner ; its steam arose from the inhabitants' kitchen mingled with the mould of the court-yard garden, and the noseless statue seemed to melt in the warm noon sunshine when the once adored Faustina Hasse came up the worn steps for the first time. Some time ago, another lady had also ascended them thinking to show compassion to the young man of the second floor ; but how different had been the reception given her by the inhabitants. Faustina never did anything alone, it was her peculiar gift to enlist sympathy, not only with herself but with the people in whom she was interested. And now the porter was able to pour out to his will, about his interesting lodger, and Herr Oput of the

Institute, who was passing out, was seized and made to tell how he had heard the young man's cry in the night; and Anchio himself coming down to see what was going on, found himself politely offering his arm to escort the old lady up the stairs. They ascended to Josquin's room in a little procession, but at the door she thanked them all and entered alone. The sight of the room touched her, its poor furniture, its small treasure of books and music, its dressing-table and glass that might have belonged to a dandy dresser in its order and refinement, covered with relics of happy days; on the bed, where Josquin lay almost unconscious, was the MS. score, and her own note crumpled beside it. Life seemed to be there in a figure with its little vanities and soothing charms, and art, best of all charmers, and sacrifice resolving the mysterious problem of suffering.

Faustina went up to the bed, and from

that hour took Josquin under her care ; for finding that he was very ill, she had him removed to her own house, and herself gave him the best nursing through the fever that had attacked him. Dr. Ivanhoff too worked to save him, and for days Faustina watched. As she held the young fingers which had often given her such delight, and listened to his wanderings, her heart went out to him, for she understood all his life. And when at last her care had brought him through, and the long hours of convalescence began, she found him so sympathetic that she could not bear to part with him, and obtained from the Capellmeister that she should carry off her patient at once to the place where they intended to spend the summer, while he (Hasse) waited till the opera season was over to follow with Lisa.

The whole was the scheme of the magnificent Doctor, who himself had found

for his friends an Enchanted Island far away from the scenes of their now discordant life, where his patient would get health and Faustina and her husband rest through the summer months. Travelling along in that magic travelling-carriage of his through the pine-covered mountains of Bohemia, he had first come upon the retreat he obtained for them—an island castle rising out of an emerald lake deeply embosomed in the mournful green of pines ; such a feast of reposeful colour to the eye, such a dream of romance to the imagination, that when he described it to Faustina, and told her that through the kindness of an august friend the castle was at her disposal, she accepted without asking her husband, and left the work of persuading him to follow her to Lisa.

And so Josquin, coming back to life, to realise disappointment and failure, to find one fair page of his life ended, yet was

greeted by pity, tenderest friendship, and hope that there might be yet an unwritten page for him to fulfil ; and the kind-hearted reader, I fear, will now sympathise with him less as he travels away with his delightful companion and nurse, who makes the long hours short with stories from her wonderful past, and will bestow it on Lisa remaining on lonely in the hot city to fulfil her engagement till the time came for her to follow with her master.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTOR'S MANŒUVRES.

IT was not Faustina who had thought to include Lisa in the summer scheme. The good Samaritan who had rescued Josquin on the highway, had acted like the Levite towards this other poor wounded heart, as we all must sometimes in a world where the strongest sympathies are the most limited. Faustina could not even guess the desolation that Josquin's absence made in Lisa's life, all the bitterness and self-reproach that had been adding to her anxiety for him. But from Ivanhoff had come the suggestion that she should accompany the Capellmeister. *He*

had recognised Lisa for his neighbour the first time that he had met her at the foot of the staircase, the day that Faustina summoned him to the Klosterhaus to see Josquin. He was struck by and afterwards could not forget the tall figure, waiting disconsolate, the longing look he had met in her eyes when she asked for news; and often after, when Josquin had been removed, he would come out of his way to the Klosterhaus to give the best report he could of her friend to the young singer, and would sit with her, cheering her with the sense of his strength, and large quick sympathy. During these visits Lisa would sometimes, in her loneliness, feel inclined to open all her heart to the Doctor, and tell him of the shadow that fell across her path and Josquin's, from the fatal inclination she had inspired in the Hof-Intendant; but then she would shrink from any confession, knowing little of the world, and

still trusting that the cause of von Plauen's prejudice against Josquin was unknown to all his friends. The Doctor also remained silent, but she gradually understood that he knew all, and would be prompt to help if called upon.

At last the day came when he could tell her that Josquin was safe, and then the Doctor looked into her face and said to himself: 'Of what use is it to come to a woman and tell her that the man she loves is quite well, when but one thing would satisfy her, to hear that he loves and is asking for her?' But he only pressed her hand, and told her that they must all go away for the summer months, to recover together from illness and anxiety.

'And can you promise him years of strength and health? What will best save him, Doctor, for the future?' she asked.

'A little happiness, my dear,' Ivanhoff

answered. ‘That is the best prescription I can give.’

A cloud came over Lisa’s face, and for a moment she was silent; then she spoke earnestly: ‘Doctor, do you think that at Warsaw I should meet with a good reception? Hasse says that I must put off my journey to England and to Italy for a year or two yet, but I am desirous only of leaving Dresden. I *cannot* work with the present Intendant; and can you give me advice about Poland?’

‘Yes, I think you would be sure of success at the Polish capital, and I think Hasse must not be afraid of letting you go to London or to Naples; but for the present, if you talk about leaving Dresden, I shall not give you any advice, and cease to come and see you altogether. When I have brought you such good news of Josquin’s recovery, when all is so prospering with you, to talk of leaving us

is ungrateful. Josquin, poor boy, he has had success enough here in his playing, and all musicians must go through some disappointment; and as for the Intendant, leave him to me. I have a little scheme for him, which will put you both out of his head.' All this he said lightly, and then, taking her hands, he added half to himself: 'And you think that *happiness* for Josquin might mean your leaving Dresden? Vous êtes la plus belle âme que je connaisse.'

Lisa clung to the idea of the 'scheme' that Ivanhoff had in his mind for von Plauen; but, in truth, the sanguine Doctor had got only a vague notion in his head: *marriage* was the cure that he saw for the Intendant's passion. The Doctor hoped that he might be distracted, and that once calmed down in new bonds, he would let the affairs of the Opera go their own way as before. He trusted himself also, as von

Plauen's most ancient adviser and confidant, to be able to bring about some desirable union, which would be the means of restoring peace to his friends at the Klosterhaus.

He said nothing more, therefore, to Lisa, but determined to speak to von Plauen before he left Dresden. The latter, he knew, had redoubled his attentions in the last month to the Vaara; for some weeks after his first declaration to her, he had seemed to draw back, mortally offended, but at the end of that short time, he had suddenly appeared to forget what had passed, and continued to show his devotion in the most marked manner. But the complete infatuation and blindness of the man was only revealed to the Doctor in the conversation that followed his suggestion of marriage. They were sitting in the verandah outside the Count's house, where he delighted to fancy himself a sort of Eastern prince. They

both smoked with large chibouks, brought to them with coffee after dinner ; for though the Russian could scarcely restrain a smile as he mingled the fumes of tobacco with the solemn Intendant, he was far too cosmopolitan not to be able to suit himself at once to his whims.

Von Plauen began to draw the conversation to Lisa to discover from the Doctor where she was going to spend the summer. Ivanhoff, however, avoided any betrayal, and persistently admired the delicate colours and combinations of the Count's furniture.

‘ It is all perfect,’ he suddenly said : ‘ but it seems to me that your palace is only too complete : your existence the same, *mon cher*. I want to see a little disorder put into it all. What shall I say ? A modern work-basket there among those Chinese cabinets ; the painted toy of a child ; a second will. The perfect unity that I have seen reign in

your house for so many years palls upon me.'

'And so you are going to join the chorus of my friends who tell me that I ought to marry. And who would you have me marry? Too much unity? want of another will? why, my dear fellow, I have not had a moment's peace with the Colonna since I put up those yellow curtains, because she said they were unbecoming to the complexion! Want of nature and children's toys? You reproach me with this, when the other day, because I allowed that minx Lara to come up and to play with my cat, she drew down my finest bit of crackle. I am out of all patience with the women, and you would have me encumber myself with a wife in high heels and a hoop.'

'There it is,' said the Doctor; 'man's idea of a wife in these days; but you know that is not my meaning. I want to see a bright intelligence here; a calm mind and a good heart.'

‘Oh yes,’ he said, ‘*mon docteur*, and I should be sent to bed at nine o’clock, and you will attend the whole family through measles and whooping-cough and inoculate all the babies after bringing them into the world.’

‘Pooh!’ said the Doctor, ‘there are many charming women of a suitable age who would make your house perfect; domestic and agreeable.’

‘Why, my dear Doctor, do you think that if I thought it possible to marry I should have waited till they had grown old and graceless? at my age shall I hang a wife’s family round my neck? No!’ he added, after a pause during which both men watched the curling wreaths of smoke with more interest than ever; ‘I see something in what you say; a man who has spent his life in the search of the beautiful ought to take a partner to crown his efforts, but then it must be the high ideal. I have for

some time made up my mind that there is but one woman in Dresden whom I could marry without loss of self-respect, or loss of liberty—and that is Elisabetha Vaara.'

The Doctor could not have been more astonished if von Plauen had told him that it was his intention to retire into a cloister. He had no idea that he could carry his attentions so far, and that he should contemplate a love-match were so completely outside his calculations that he could find no answer, and the other went on in his languid way: 'Upon my honour, Doctor, I am in earnest. With her, at least, marriage would not sink me down into a bourgeois calm, or hamper me with new conventionalities of life. I understand her now, but once I feared that for all her pride, she was not more honest than any other woman in Dresden; a certain young priest who knows her well has told me much of her life and reassured

me. There is little separating her from me ; that little shall soon be overcome. I can imagine her lying here in her queenly fashion. Of course she must give up the stage, and though she is attached to it, I think there will not be too much difficulty ; I offer her liberty, position, my devotion. Can't you imagine her here and at Teplitz ? . . . Yes, I think I should live a good deal at Teplitz. I shall surround the goddess with all that can make her happy ; my nightingale shall be longed for by the herd here, and there, all to myself, I shall enjoy her wild strains. Nature and Art are combined in her perfectly ; with her I shall possess both. Occasionally others of our choice shall be allowed to enter the charmed gardens, such as you, *mon docteur*.'

The Doctor thought it wiser not to lose his serenity, but in his inmost heart he hated the idea that this pedantic dilettante wished to ally to himself the pure soul of Elisabetha.

‘Well, you have always taken us by surprise, you know ; but I should have thought that in some person of your own position you would have made a better choice.’

‘It shall never be said that I needed rank to adorn my marriage-sacrifice . . . after all it is a sacrifice.’

‘But do you think you will ever persuade her to give up the stage? Do you think you will gain her love?’ the Doctor said, unable to bear any longer this display of von Plauen’s vanity.

‘My dear fellow, she must be touched by my disinterestedness. I should have no difficulty at all but for one obstacle coming between us. I trusted to have got him out of the way long ago—that ambitious fiddler, Josquin Dorioz.’

‘Ah, poor fellow!’ the Doctor exclaimed, with presence of mind.

‘Yes, he is one of those whimsical music-

writers,' von Plauen went on, 'whom all the women rave about, because of a certain unhealthiness and sensibility. Thinks his music original, because he eschews a few conventional restraints of composition. Well, he must get it performed somewhere else but in Dresden!'

'Ah, my dear Count, and so you think that *he* cares for the Vaara, and she for him. Such is life! Instead of this, which I grant you, would have been the right and proper thing, he has gone hopelessly in love with a young lady far above him in rank, and for Lisa he has the most platonic friendship. Poor fellow! you have not much to fear from him, I assure you, Count. I have been nursing him through an illness which is the beginning, I fear, of a sad ending.'

'What did you say about platonic friendship? Ah! he is just the fellow for that sort of thing. I have seen a good deal of these

affairs, Doctor, and I know them to be the most fatal to all other love interests. Has not he been a good deal with the Capellmeisterin?’

‘Yes; she nursed him through this illness with a mother’s love—only thanks to her care . . .’

‘Really that Faustina is too eccentric!’ interrupted von Plauen. ‘I believe it is to spite me she takes up the boy. I never saw anything in him. Did you say he was not likely to get over this?’

The Doctor shook his head. ‘His mother died of consumption. His own life is against him; for I do assure you, Count, that all his life is centred in his music, and disappointment will do the work quickly for him; *then*, I think you are less likely to win the good graces of Lisa Vaara, whose interest in his work, I grant you, is very great.’

‘Pity the sorrows of an unfortunate art-

patron and Court Intendant! Every raving boy, whose first work you refuse, comes and dies on your doorstep; and the women look askance at you. But my first duty is to the Court. I can't take this work; it would never answer.'

'You are prejudiced. Surely the music has great merit. I do not speak from my own opinion only, I have heard it praised by many good judges. The composer is so well known by his playing.'

'The worst of it is, that when we have allowed one opera to be brought out, we are certain to have a series.'

'He must make haste, poor boy,' said the Doctor seriously, 'if he wants to finish another work.' Then he said nothing more, for von Plauen seemed to consider.

This conversation took place quite at the end of the season, for the Doctor was just about to leave the town. Von Plauen knew

nothing of Lisa's approaching departure, for Ivanhoff had reconciled it with his conscience to allow him to believe that she was going to remain on in Dresden. He rose to go, on the plea of an engagement; for he did not wish to say anything further, and thought that he had sufficiently hinted to the Intendant, that his best chance with Lisa was in showing kindness to her friend, and that he had little to fear from the young composer as a rival.

‘And where is your Excellence off to, and when?’ he asked as he said good-bye.

The Count looked up with an air of fierce determination. ‘I remain,’ he said. ‘What place should attract me, in my present mood, but this one?’

The Doctor could not help laughing to himself as he left the house at this ‘mood’ of von Plauen's; but, nevertheless, it did not make him feel inclined to trifle with Lisa's

matters, and he went immediately to Hasse, and urged him to take her to stay with him in the Altmarkt, where Faustina's absence left him very drearily, until the time when, to von Plauen's surprise, she would leave Dresden with him for the Castle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNSEEN HAND.

UP to the last moment before her departure, Lisa, who counted the days to joining Josquin in Bohemia, feared that the Capellmeister might refuse to leave Dresden ; and when once they were started on the road, very different was this journey from that of the pair who had gone before—Josquin and his fascinating companion of sixty. Lisa blindly travelled through the varied scenery with eyes only impatiently desiring her friend, and Hasse, always miserable on a journey, swathed in flannels, with a night-cap over his ears, went over all his grievances

from the worries and disputes of the past season to the folly of the Doctor for sending him along such bad roads, so that Lisa felt that he might turn back at any moment. Faustina had written, enchanted with the romantic castle. She had been met there by friends from Venice and Vienna. Her patient was comfortable and progressing. Everything was suited to the needs of an invalid ; and she was all impatience for her husband's arrival.

But a bitter surprise was in store for the Capellmeister and Lisa, worn out at their journey's end with joltings and discussions ; the sight of the ferry-boat and the lake was the last drop in his cup. He who always crossed a bridge with his eyes shut saw himself cut off from everything by this piece of water, and he stood in despair on the shore. The party already assembled on the terrace watched Lisa, grave as usual, urging and en-

treating the Capellmeister to trust himself to the small ferry-boat to cross the lake, that separated them by some two hundred yards from their friends.

His wife in vain called out a welcome.

‘Faustina, what new fantastic idea is this of yours?’ he roared back. ‘It is a wonder I find you safe!’

‘My dear angel, it is a paradise. Come only to try it!’

‘But I am no angel, Faustina, and I have no wings to reach your paradise!’

‘Wait till you see my beloved friend. Your supper is waiting . . . your rooms ready.’ At last, after much more recrimination, the Capellmeister was safely landed in his wife’s embrace, and Lisa met Josquin’s bright greeting, and was satisfied. The two Italian friends from Venice were introduced. An excellent supper was prepared in the old hall for the travellers; and the evening was

spent by the little party in a deep window overlooking the lake, from whence they watched the light fading on the hill-tops, and the moon rising behind the fringe of pines, and stealing over the ghostly blue landscape. Josquin produced a zither, with which he had been amusing himself since he came, and played them some characteristic melodies on the little instrument, the use of which seems to be a second nature with the inhabitants of dreamy pine-countries. They all listened amused, till the Capellmeister had fallen fast asleep ; Faustina became engrossed in conversation with her friends ; and then Lisa was alone with Josquin for the first time since much had happened. There was so much to be said, but somehow they were not unrestrained as usual.

‘ What colour did the lake seem to you when you arrived, Lisa ? ’

‘ I don’t remember ; blue, I think. ’

‘That is what we thought to begin with. To-morrow it will seem to you greenish-blue, the third day, bright green.’

‘I am sure it will always seem to me blue.’

‘What did you think of X —, that you passed on the road five miles from here?’

‘I do not remember just now having seen it.’

‘It was very remarkable. I think you have not the spirit of travel, Lisa, nor the eye for blues and greens. Let us ask the Capellmeisterin the colour of the lake?’

‘Josquin!’ she said, ‘we have not seen each other for months, years—how long is it? Have we nothing but the colour of the lake to talk about?’

He held out his hand. ‘Yes, dear sister, I am so glad you have come; let us talk; it is ages since we did.’

‘I have not the spirit of travel,’ she

said, 'for it seems to me we have been conveyed here in a dream to a land of dreams.'

'Yes, from the world where we are awake—we are fast asleep here,' he answered, a little bitterly.

'But it is divinely peaceful,' she said. 'What a place to forget vexations in! It is impossible to realise the hot existence beyond these pines from this perfect rest.'

'Ah Lisa, I shall soon have enough of rest ; do you know that I long to be back in Dresden ?' He looked towards Faustina. She was leaning out of the window talking expressively in their own tongue to the Italians, and he went on, 'You know of all her angelic kindness ; it was delicious here for a fortnight, and I would not for worlds say anything to her of my discontent ; but to you I can grumble.'

He looked up at Lisa with the old confidence ; it was a true expression for brother's love—to *her* he could grumble.

‘ But you will return to Dresden when you have gained strength ; only rest will give you that.’

‘ You see, Lisa, we must each judge for ourselves what is the best rest for our minds ; I have been convalescent six weeks, and the Meisterin scarcely lets me play. I have ideas for a new symphony, and I am obliged to work at it in secret.’

‘ No, Josquin, you are wrong to work; why not simply give yourself up to the present moment of ease ? ’

‘ For the last six months I have had *no* present ; my one idea has been to work for the future. . . .’

‘ But,’ she urged, not knowing his meaning, ‘ there will be time enough for work when. . . .’

‘ The night comes when no man can work,’ he replied softly. ‘ Look here, I am a selfish fellow always to talk of my affairs, but you have ever spoilt me. Ivanhoff says I must be

quiet if I want to live ; I don't care to live if I am to be quiet. My idea is now to go to Vienna and see what I can do there—we are half way. I want you to sound Hasse as to the chance my opera would have there, and what he would think of the plan.'

Lisa had understood his meaning now, and she could not reply. When she had first seen Josquin that day, she had thought him looking fresher and stronger than through the winter, and had rejoiced in the quiet and rest that had done so much for him ; but now she understood that it was no real peace he had found, that one idea consumed him, that he panted after success for his work ; for it, if not for himself, the fulness of life and the sympathy of men. Faustina she thought might be mistaken in keeping him thus from all the excitement of his art—a great interest might do everything for him.

But indeed Josquin seemed to have found

all his new plans for work independently of Hasse's wishes and his wife's : he poured them out now to his silent confidant ; his thoughts, he told her, turned entirely towards Vienna ; he was going to write to Lichtenberg, to his cousin Charles—they might help his opera, and then the chevalier Gluck might perhaps give strong aid. Of Dresden he must renounce all hope, and Faustina's Italian friends gave him little encouragement for the Italian theatres, so where should he turn but to Vienna ? But Josquin added, ' Without you, dear sister, to sing in my opera, without being able to take a lead in it myself, how different it will be from what I dreamt ! I wonder,' he went on seeming to follow a weary train of thought, ' if von Plauen ever really looked at poor Alcestis.'

Lisa shivered ; a shadow always seemed to fall between her and Josquin at the Intendant's name. ' I myself,' she said abruptly with her flushed cheek turned from him, ' hope that

I may not have another season in Dresden. Josquin, we will talk to Hasse about Vienna.'

'Dear sister, you must not think of breaking up the only thing that seems like home to me by leaving Dresden. . . .' He was going to add more to comfort her, seeing that he had troubled her by mentioning von Plauen, but Faustina came up, scolding herself for not having shut the windows, through which the moon streamed on the couple talking there, and Hasse who calmly slept. He was conveyed still half-asleep to the room which had been chosen for him, because it contained the alcove he was accustomed to, and there he enjoyed his usual game of picquet with Lisa before settling for the night.

In spite of the sad impression her conversation of the night before made upon her at the moment, Lisa awoke the next morning with a sense of freedom and quiet; and the days that followed were full of happiness for

her. Faustina had established perfect regularity in the life of the castle, and imposed her will on all (with one exception), happy to acquiesce in arrangements for their comfort and amusement. The Capellmeister never stirred beyond the terrace, but friends came to visit him all the way from Vienna and Italy ; and he began to forget his vexations in talking of old glorious days. And Lisa, though she may not have had the true enjoyment of scenery, felt at ease in the wild mountain-country ; the perfect freedom ; her solitary rambles through the woods, where she would sometimes pour forth her voice when nobody could hear, and then, falling silent, listen to the quickened sound of distant waterfalls, the rustling of pines overhead, and all Nature's music brawling on in grand disdain of human interruption—her renewed intercourse with Josquin, all made these days some of the happiest of her life.

It was good for her poor hungry heart to be taken into confidence at once by her friend ; and what wonder if Lisa felt a naïf satisfaction in opposing Faustina's views, and if her hopes turned to Vienna with new buoyancy ? There no shadows fell, as in Dresden, of fear, mistrust, and oppression.

Faustina, however, urged wisely that her patient should not yet think of ambition. Josquin's present mood was sad ; but she dreaded yet more for him that weary time of suspense. He must wait awhile, and not give up hope of seeing his opera in Dresden. Hasse, of course, was averse to his pupil's bringing it out elsewhere. Ivanhoff wrote mysteriously that he yet hoped great things from a change in the Surintendant's mind. Josquin was to bide his time.

But in spite of all, the composer seemed impelled by a devouring impatience to send his work to Vienna. He wrote to Charles, to

Lichtenberg, to the Ritter Gluck ; inaction seemed terrible to him, and to Lisa alone he told why. She clung eagerly to the plan of going to Vienna, seeing in it the saving of Josquin's hopes, the saving of her own peace, she felt despairingly that while she remained in Dresden Josquin had a powerful enemy. And so Josquin sent his opera, and once more counted the days to receiving the answer from the authorities at the theatre.

Meanwhile the *poet* of our story, the metamorphosised Paradies, whose sinister figure so often comes like his own shadow over Josquin's path, was following the fate of their joint work with no less anxiety and ambition than the musician. We have seen how he had worked his way to von Plauen's ear with reassuring whispers about the relations between Josquin and Lisa ; he had since got himself a place as secretary to the Surintendant, who had

been charmed by his discreet and impassive mien ; and who little suspected in the machine-like abbé the composer of the libretto of Josquin's despised 'Alcestis.'

Elisabetha, however, did not approve of spyings and whisperings, even if they were in Josquin's interest ; and about this time, when the opera was sent to Vienna, she was loth even that Josquin should let him know of the move. However he wrote, and the answer that came at once made Josquin laugh ; but Elisabetha burst forth indignantly.

'Dear friends !' Paradies wrote, 'with great joy in my cruel prison-house I received the news that our *joint* work is on its way to fame in Vienna. But, dear friends, our position is very dangerous. I tremble to think yet of a fall 'twixt two stools ! Were it not better to wait ? His Excellency only wants to make us feel his power ; his passion grows daily—his jealousy of us. Ah ! if he knew

my share in the work on which he is resolved to show his power. But he despises me ; he treats me like a worm—but I digress. He now only seeks to keep us in suspense, what if he should discover that the *great work* has gone to Vienna, that it may be brought out there in spite of him, that we carry off the Fräulein Vaara!—there will be danger. But he shall not know. He smokes opium, dear friends, by the hour ; he dreams away the time till the Fräulein should return . . . He shall know nothing about our scheme, or I am not your devoted

‘PARADIES.’

‘What does the poor devil mean?’ said Josquin, after reading this composition. ‘I should like to know what power this man has in Vienna!’ But Lisa seemed to suffer from gloomy forebodings for days after reading Paradies’ words.

Our poor friends lived now their real life

in the rare letters that reached them, but the hostess who had chosen this green isle for them loved not to see them absorbed, and Josquin did his best to make up to his sympathising friends for all they went through on his account : he took to his violin again, and left the zither to a little boatman to whom he taught his own melodies ; sometimes he used to arrange little entertainments in the great hall, in which Lisa sang and the Italian friends acted their own tragedies. But he was concealing the impatience and longing for life which devoured him. Sometimes, when Faustina would come and insist upon his taking rest, he would sink into his corner by the great window, and looking out into the eternal stillness of the pine-woods exclaim to himself ; ‘ Rest, rest ; why do they give me the one thing I most dread ? ’

Once in the week the little ferry-boat would come across with letters from over the

mountains, and Josquin lived for these letters in this retreat which had been chosen for him, and he felt that the little boat linked him to life. One day he watched it approaching with beating heart, it must bring him *some* news from Vienna, he thought. The little fisherman held up two letters, one with Lichtenberg's great seal. 'See, Lisa ! just what I hoped for,' he exclaims ; but why does Lisa's heart sink at seeing Paradies' handwriting on the other ?

The Count's letter gave almost certain hope of Josquin's success. The Capellmeister had seen his opera, all was going well for its acceptance, Charles von Gasparein was full of interest, His Excellency himself had spoken for Josquin, they must wait patiently for a week, and then he hoped that Josquin might be summoned to Vienna.

Josquin read this and looked round with a smile : he was thinking that the mountains

seemed suddenly to lose their oppressive coldness, that the clouds sailed faster, the colours of the trees were less mournful, the cataract roared joyfully—life, life! lay yet beyond for him. He looked at Lisa—she saw nothing of the new glory—she was holding out Paradies' letter, which she had opened, with a pale face.

‘What can the poor devil say to scare you, Lisa?’ and he read hastily.

‘Dear friends.—The danger has come, and it is through some carelessness of yours! Who is Brigitta von Gasparein? She writes to His Excellency—she talks of Josquin as her nephew—she knows all about his opera—she looks upon the musical profession as a disgrace—she calls von Plauen to the help of her family. Dear friends, I hope all will yet be well, but *I* put my trust in no aunts—our common work must not suffer from yours.

Von Plauen eats opium still . . . let us trust, let us trust.'

'Why do you listen to the railings of this idiot, Elisabetha? for once let us hope.'

The days seemed weeks, the weeks years, to Josquin before the next ferry-boat brought a mail to the lonely castle. At last the day came when he opened the Vienna opera's large sealed paper—his opera was rejected without any explanation.

A short, warm note from Charles told all. The von Gasparein family had got wind of Josquin's efforts to come before the Vienna public. They had been powerless to oppose his opera, but Brigitta's intimation to von Plauen had brought him to Vienna. From the time of his arrival the authorities had changed their tone. Charles hinted at bribes—it was a pitiful story, and the young fashionable's light soul seemed to have been pierced by the thought of his friend's disap-

pointment. He could not forgive his people for their cruel interference. He wanted to escape, and could not Josquin let him carry him away to Italy?

But after this new startling check to all his hopes, Josquin yet seemed to have no energy left but for his opera. 'In Italy, it has no chance,' he said. 'Where Count von Plauen is, there is no hope for me. I must go to Berlin.'

'But in time you will get known at Venice,' Faustina urged. 'You will get rest and pleasure there meanwhile. . . .'

'The time is too short—I think I have just enough left to see Alcestis live in Germany; but I cannot go back to Dresden.'

The refusal had depressed Hasse, because he looked upon it as a personal affront; Faustina, of course, was furious, and Lisa, full of dark forebodings, could see nothing but a cruel fate making her the obstacle to her

friend's success, in this new refusal of his opera.

There was one person, however, who did not see any cause for despair in the new disappointment at Vienna. This was Dr. Ivanhoff, who had carried away hope from that conversation of three months before ; in which the Intendant had revealed to him all his passion, and in which the Doctor had tried to turn his jealousy of the young composer into pity. Ivanhoff did not know what new mood influenced the capricious Intendant, but he thought he saw a meaning in his interference with the opera at Vienna. Von Plauen might wish to keep Josquin's work under his own patronage, in order that he might use it to win Elisabetha's gratitude and favour.

Of his hopes, however, he did not speak to Josquin when he wrote. His kind letter contained only a scolding. Why had he

gone against his advice? Had he not told him to remain faithful to his Dresden vocation in spite of disappointment? To Lisa he wrote with tender interest, to the Capellmeister of von Plauen's increasing unpopularity, to Faustina with a spice of scandal. And their kind correspondent cheered the melancholy little party, and they each wrote him privately a little plan for leaving Dresden. With these letters in his pocket, the Doctor went to von Plauen.

‘What news of the adorable Lisa?’ the Intendant immediately asked, little suspecting that all his transaction at Vienna was known.

‘Ah! what a sad summer she has spent, poor thing,’ Ivanhoff answered. ‘Faustina and Hasse are broken down. She is not only nursing them, but a worse invalid—poor Josquin Dorioz.’

‘And what have you to tell me about

this *platonie* invalid? How does he thrive under all his nurses?’

‘In Italy he might live some years, not in our climate. Do you know that the whole party talk of emigrating thither?’

‘What do you mean by the whole party?’ von Plauen burst out; ‘not the Vaara included?’

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders, and said coldly: ‘*Que voulez-vous?* Dresden has not smiled on her of late.’

Ivanhoff said no more, but he felt that he had guessed rightly the reason of von Plauen’s interference in Vienna. A few days afterwards the Intendant showed him a letter he had written to the Klosterhaus to greet Josquin on his arrival. It was to announce to him that his opera was accepted upon reconsideration, and that it would be put into rehearsal immediately. Lisa was greeted with a garden of roses in her room.

CHAPTER VII.

REJECTED.

‘A LITTLE happiness’ was what Dr. Ivanhoff had prescribed for his patient. It had come at last, and Josquin was restored to the life he had longed for so ardently ;—he had little dreamt what a joyful return it would be. No longer did his life seem to fall short in cruel contradiction, for he tasted now verily of life in life, he experienced the fulfilment of human hope in one of its most perfect forms, the interpretation of his own creation. He came back to Dresden to find delightful work cut out for him, cheerful activity opening to him again, new excitement every day, in the bringing out of his work; all the morning

there were singers, managers, scene-painters to be seen, in the evening a pleasant society to make much of him, old friends to greet him once more as their favourite musician, and he seemed to get new life from contact with life, and to rise above his weakness.

Charles arrived in Dresden shortly after Josquin, and came full of his wish to make up to his cousin for the cruel wrongs done by his family ; but Josquin had no more need of Italy. He kept his cousin, and as in the old days exerted himself to make him known in his own world.

Meanwhile the rehearsals of 'Alcestis' progressed, and every day Josquin experienced new exquisite sensations ; the first sound of the violins in his overture, which he had heard only in dreams, the delight of conducting his orchestra, the perfecting of the choruses ; one by one these pleasures became known to him : there remained but one new experience

of this kind, the climax of the composer's satisfaction—he had not yet heard Lisa in the part he had composed for her.

There never was a composer so blest in his prima-donna ; Lisa had been singing her very best since her return, she had gained a wonderful power in this her third season in Dresden ; here was one who was mistress of her public, and understood the composer's meaning so well that, as musicians, there was but one soul between them ; here was a devotion and enthusiasm ready to be poured out in the performance of his work which many an older musician than Josquin would have envied. But though he knew this, and was grateful, tender even to her, he did not realise all that Elisabetha was to him till the day of the first full rehearsal of his work.

The rehearsal was fixed to take place three weeks before the performance ; the days had passed quickly, and they had reached the

new year. The choruses and minor scenes of Josquin's opera were in an advanced state, he had been patient and firm, as he could afford to be, through all difficulties, and the musicians for the most part loved him ; and though there were some jealousies, he had had misfortunes to soften the harsh criticism that usually pursues the successful. But it was the time when first the interest of the singers and performers begins to be tired by constant rehearsals, the first excitement is succeeded by flatness, and the appearance of the prima-donna created a wonderful effect on the spirits of the artists, tired of the business-like repetitions. There in the shabby day-light theatre, Lisa appeared with her long floating cloak simply clasped at the neck, and with the first outburst of her voice imparted new interest to band, chorus, and young leader. There was a great earnestness they could not but catch from her ; an *élan*, a fire, a life-giving

spontaneity. The tenor was almost paralysed at first by her vehemence ; amid interruptions she showed a strange mixture of patience, and that 'fierceness' of which poor Tötli complained. She would stop suddenly to silence two young musicians in the orchestra, and lectured the chief flute a good deal on the pitch of his instrument ; but when the composer spoke, however long his directions to the chorus or other singers, she listened with perfect forbearance, herself encouraging such interruptions, and going through the passages again of her own accord.

As the rehearsal went on, she threw herself more and more into the spirit of her part, and soon the other singers seemed to be carried up into the tragic spirit of the play, and rendered the music with precision and power. Who that had seen Josquin then would have recognised in him the traces of illness and languor ? who would not have

envied him as he led his band? He was very quiet as a leader, but his face showed the excitement he felt, and his eyes were suffused with a happy radiance; indeed he felt as though he swam on a buoyant sea after sluggish waters. Lisa's rendering of his *Alceste* was all that he had imagined, she seemed to say all that was possible, and sometimes to rise above what he had dreamt.

The whole scene would have interested a stranger; it was watched with intense anxiety by a man from one of the dark boxes on a level with the pit; he observed the conductor's face, but Josquin was unconscious of his presence. When the rehearsal was over, and the musicians were departing, he had a few last directions to give the chorus, but immediately hurried round to the foyer, which Lisa was just leaving with her faithful *Regenfurth*. He seized her hands. 'Lisa, dearest sister, it was divinely sung: how

from henceforth can I serve you?' She could not speak, but a light shone in her face, Josquin then *felt* her beauty for the first time.

She could only give him a look and turn to go. At that moment she saw Count von Plauen, who had come in, a minute before; he had watched the rehearsal, he had heard Josquin's words as he clasped Lisa's hands.

'Allow me to lead you to the door, Madam, my carriage will take you home. You were superb to-day, Fräulein Vaara, and your friend M. Dorioz seems to thrive upon these rehearsals.'

He said this as he passed out of Josquin's hearing, for Lisa, impelled by a sudden paralysing fear, had taken his hand to accept his offer of his carriage; nor did the young man see the Intendant's face, it was quite pale and his eyes were passionate. Lisa looked up at the Count almost scared, as she said good-bye; the light was all gone from

her face, and she threw herself back in his carriage as it drove away, as though she did not wish to be seen in it.

But Josquin, still happy, went and flung himself down on a sofa near the fire-place of the foyer behind the theatre: the Intendant did not return that way, he could not face the young man, but surely von Plauen's heart would have been softened had he seen his rival then. Josquin's face was pale with the excitement of conducting, but his eyes were lighted up with a happy radiance; his mind was still full of the impression of beauty and power that Lisa's acting had left, and with the perfect satisfaction of seeing his work accomplished came the thought of the loveliness of life with overpowering force; it was not her performance, not his own, which gave him such satisfaction, but the thought of her love and worth. Not any experience of life seemed to him to compare with what he

had felt when he clasped Lisa's hands just then, and his heart felt thankful, for the great sister-soul that had grown beside his own, that had guided him through the past, and now made more than ought else the future beautiful to him : in it he trusted to serve her more perfectly. Exhausted by such overpowering happiness, Josquin lay in the opera gallery.

Meanwhile Count von Plauen had gone straight to Ivanhoff.

‘ Doctor, how long do you give Josquin Dorioz to live ? ’

‘ What ! ’ said the doctor, affecting great anxiety, ‘ do you come from the opera ? is he worse ? what has happened ? ’

‘ Worse indeed ! I have just left him looking as strong and well as you or I. Doctor, you are mistaken quite about his strength, and about the state of things between him and—Look here ! he was squeezing the

hands of the divine Lisa just now with a truly platonic fervour !’

The Doctor saw the Count’s unusual excitement, and need to be soothed.

‘ My dear friend, I can only rejoice at this account you give of my patient ; as for his feeling for your beloved, you must not fear that it rivals yours. You must allow for the composer’s *furor*, for the artist-sympathy between them. Haven’t you seen enough of these excitable and truly admirable beings not to be surprised at such outbursts ? ’

‘ But it was not common gratitude to her for singing so divinely in his music—and *how* she did sing ! It was love, I tell you ! O Heavens, that I had foreseen it all sooner ; he will live to rob me of the reward of all the unselfishness I have shown him. I will tell you, Ivanhoff, for the past three months I cannot see her act without spending a sleepless night after it ; my life has become regular

through her influence, my passion for her has swallowed up all else. I am prepared for any sacrifice for her ; and do you not think it is hard at my time of life, Doctor, to find myself impeded at every turn by a lad who owes everything to me ? You have not judged well of his strength ; he will live yet to prevent my carrying out any of my plans for life.'

'If I have been mistaken in his powers does that mean that you have no chance with Lisa ? You must have patience, dear Count, you are winning her respect and love by your kindness.'

'No ! for once, Ivanhoff, I think your counsel mistaken ; if I wait, I may find myself bitterly taken in. I will ask for her love ; if I cannot persuade her by my own love, at least she shall feel my power ! Anyhow I will be out of suspense.'

'But you risk to lose all by declaring yourself,' the Doctor could only urge, but

he could not say anything farther, for he saw that von Plauen's irritation at the moment was too great to allow him to listen to anything.

‘It will be the same three weeks hence—but after all I have good hope; remember that she does not yet suspect all that I wish to offer her—the knowledge may make her see me in my true light.’

And he went, and the good Doctor could only trust that things would not change much though the Intendant might declare himself. That evening von Plauen composed a letter—the formal proposal of marriage to Lisa. He had often imagined himself making the full declaration of his intentions to her, and now as he formed the flattering sentences that conveyed the expression of his honourable feelings, his ruffled temper was smoothed down, his morbid fears disappeared, and when he concluded, he felt so convinced of the

honour he was conferring upon her, that he felt quite dazzled by the brilliancy of his offer, and he could scarcely realise how an hour before he had doubted its success.

It was Paradies to whom this note was confided. 'You will deliver this yourself to the Fräulein Vaara, you will ask her permission to call in an hour for her reply; you will then go and find M. Dorioz, question him closely about the rehearsal that took place to-day, and you will give me an account of the impression it seems to have made upon him. Return to me then with the answer to my note,' and as the confidential secretary received the magnificent billet, he did not betray under his pale eyelashes the faintest trace of interest, though he thrilled to think what were the contents of the letter, and longed to know what had happened at the rehearsal.

When he arrived at the Klosterhaus, Josquin was in Lisa's room: she was singing,

he resting in an arm-chair. Poor Paradies ! it was a hard fate that made him the instrument of his friends' tormentor : he felt a pang at the sight of his friends' peaceful fireside—it was a feeling of mixed jealousy and pity, and he knew instinctively that they looked upon his entrance as an ill-omen. And yet was he not important to them, had he not done well for them so far, however much they might hate the by-paths and steady ways he took to secure their common interests ? He delivered his master's note formally to Lisa, and then fell on Josquin's neck. ' Dear friend, we will leave the Fräulein Vaara to answer her billet. I would have a few words with you in your room. . . . '

' Why, Paradies ! ' Josquin was saying, ' don't wear such a pale face. My dear boy, why weren't you there to-day, to see your Alcestis in her first rehearsal ? it was glorious—confound all your cautiousness

and these notes you bring. We are all safe, Paradies !’

‘ Hush ! hush !’ Paradies said, quite terrified ; ‘ my beloveds, I am your tender friend, take my advice and be cautious. Dorioz, I must speak with you and Fräulein Vaara. I implore you show the greatest caution—the supreme moment is at hand ; come, lead me to your apartment,’ he said, dragging Josquin by the arm. He felt that he must be able to tell his master that they had conversed in any other place but Lisa’s sitting-room—that Josquin must know nothing of the contents of von Plauen’s letter to her. They left the room together.

Lisa was flushing over the first glance at the unhappy note, when Paradies’ head was put in again : ‘ Dear friend, do nothing rash — it is a great moment for caution. We depend upon you. Thank God I am in a position to warn you !’

A thrill of horror ran through Lisa after he had disappeared. Paradies seemed to add to the note of which he was the bearer, all the sinister meaning that she strove not to give to it. She had read at the first glance von Plauen's words calmly; she had flushed only with the scorn which a woman is privileged to feel towards the man who has been too infatuated to recognise the hopelessness of his importunity—for one instant she felt almost grateful to von Plauen for giving her the opportunity for explaining herself; her whole soul longed to pour itself out in one frank full refusal, to crush honestly once for all the obstinate hopes built on so little—to have done with 'caution,' friendliness, and the cruel necessity for conciliation. This had been her first impulse when she read his words; how easy, if she could have followed it, would have been her action. But Paradies added horror to her situation by showing

its complication. His master's look of that afternoon ; his words, 'Your friend seems to thrive mightily well on these rehearsals,' spoken with such suppressed fury—came back to her ; she felt that Paradies' words were only too much needed by her. Josquin's nobler soul, she knew, would have despised his mean reminder that they depended on her ; it was not the less true, she had no right to act as though she had no one but herself to consider in the refusal of von Plauen's hand. She strove to find words humble and conciliating to express it in. She was under a debt of gratitude to him—for what ? an injustice withdrawn ! Poor boon ! She read again the vain composition before her, and all feelings disappeared but that of resentment against the man who so calmly proposed to her to give up her calling at his bidding, and she felt that there could be but one answer to his note. She wrote :

‘Your Excellency—I am grateful to you for the expression of your kind consideration. I am surprised that you do not know what my only answer to your letter can be. I can never give up my vocation to the stage, and therefore I can never be your wife. Do not think me ungrateful for the benefits you have shown me of late and always. It is a cruel fate that makes me more in your eyes than a humble singer, but I earnestly beg you to give up all thought of one whom you would find little answering to the illusions which make you look upon her as worthy of so great honour from you. Nothing that you can offer me can make me think for an instant of giving up my liberty and my Art.

‘ELISABETHIA VAARA.’

This note did Lisa’s forbearance great credit; she had torn up many copies before she could bring herself to the expression of

such a calm refusal. Paradies called for it in an hour.

There was to be a second full rehearsal of the 'Alcestis' two days following : that same afternoon a notice was put up on the door of the theatre announcing that the performance of the opera was to be indefinitely postponed, and there was therefore no rehearsal. Thus had Count von Plauen taken to himself seven devils worse than the first, when he had received Lisa's answer to his note.

The musicians stood round the notice that evening before opera-time, asking each other what it could mean. Some said that the Intendant had not liked the music when he heard it done at the first rehearsal he attended, nor judged that it would suit the Court. He had had some sudden fancy that it would interfere with a work which he himself wished to bring out.

'Well, it is not a bad matter finished up,'

said Colophonius confidentially to his young friend Tötli, as they took their places in the orchestra. 'Fearfully *anstrengend*, that music to play !'

'Yes, such scoring ! But I think that I shall be able to make something of that flute air in society.'

'Ah poor fellow !' said Bleikopf, the tender-hearted. 'I liked his music well enough, and I believe Dresden would have gone mad over it. It is a sad blow—a bad affair.'

And all watched with compassion the young composer taking his usual place in the orchestra. Josquin had received the cruel notice at his rooms that day from Paradis. As usual, the reticent secretary had received his orders with the dreamy composure which made him so trustworthy in his master's eyes. How astonished would the latter have been had he heard the loud

lamentations into which our author burst out, as he brought the composer the news of the sad end put to the performance of their common work! Paradies could not even refrain from exclaiming against Lisa, who left them thus hopeless when she was so powerful. In his agitation he trembled from head to foot. ‘You, Dorioz, have still your violin! I have no other hope for renown—fortune is so cruel to me. . . . See, Josquin, it is Elisabetha who must plead for us. Let me tell you my fears: her answer to the Intendant’s note, which I carried the other day, has done the mischief . . . nay, hear me’—but, as once before, Paradies had appeared to Josquin as a warning against sentimental despair, so now did a sort of horror come over him; and he seemed to see in the brooding secretary the double of himself, and would not hear another word from him. He had felt dizzy and blind when he received the first shock of his disappointment. For a few

minutes he was unable to take a step ; but he soon cut Paradies short, and broke from him, rushing out he scarcely knew where. He suddenly remembered that he had to play in the orchestra very soon, and going into a café he ordered a bottle of wine, and drank tumbler after tumbler till the blood ran more kindly through his veins ; then strengthened, he went into the theatre, and played like mad, looking neither to the right nor to the left ; and immediately afterwards went for comfort to the Capellmeisterin.

Faustina knew all. It was the greatest relief to her to see her beloved young friend bearing up against disappointment, though she could see what effort there was in his manner.

‘ Dear Meisterin,’ he said ; ‘ I have had cakes and ale all my life ; I can put up better with disappointment now that I am stronger, only I *must* leave Dresden, and seek my fortunes elsewhere.’

Faustina vainly abused von Plauen, and wondered what was the new cause of his cruelty. They neither of them knew of his formal proposal to Lisa, but when Faustina said a word implying that she was in fault, Josquin checked her.

‘Poor Lisa, she will feel it more than I,’ and Faustina, as often before, now felt that she dare not say what she thought.

Nevertheless Josquin found it impossible to go that night and find Lisa; he could only leave a line at her door.

‘Dearest sister,—Don’t grieve too much for me. My poor “Alcestis” has caused you too much trouble already. *You* made it great, you might have made it live! . . .

‘Still there is always friendship and sunshine and song left. Let us be always faithful to these, and to each other.

‘Your JOSQUIN.’

Sitting in her lonely room in pitiful distress Lisa received this note (happily it had not been one of her nights at the opera). She had many hours wept in sympathy with Josquin—she had wrung her hands in agonising self-reproach ; and then she had been making up her mind to the one effort it was clear to her she must make, but which she again and again shrank from in hopelessness and horror.

The next morning she felt that she must go to von Plauen himself, and implore the pity of the man she had just rejected scornfully. But Josquin's note brought her comfort and strength for her action. She kept it in her clasped hands all night, and it helped her to look forward with more calmness to the effort of the next day.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOSQUIN'S ADVOCATE.

THE next morning when Lisa came to his palace, Count von Plauen was sitting in his study in no enviable mood. Ever since he had given the cruel order for stopping the new opera he had been receiving remonstrances and petitions which only increased his irritation against the young composer. Lisa's letter had, as we have seen, rested her refusal of his hand upon her Art, which she could not give up; but he had persuaded himself that this objection might be removed, and the only real obstacle to his love was Josquin Dorioz.

That morning, the Doctor had come before he was up, to tell him that he was making a great mistake ; the Capellmeister, coming to discuss the question of his pupil's opera, had remained to make a long scene over all his grievances ; and, he had just received a note on pink paper from a lady in the world to tell him that he did not know, perhaps, the circumstances which made the postponement of the young and interesting Mr. Dorioz's work a very great disappointment in all her circle where he was such a favourite. She went into harrowing details about his health, and finished up by saying, that she was sure the amiable Intendant would make concessions in favour of *her* young *protégé*. Even Paradies, the silent secretary, who, as we know, was not quite disinterested, surprised the master by making remonstrances when he gave him orders about the works to be performed instead of

the luckless 'Alcestis.' And, in the midst of all this opposition, the infatuated Intendant had begun to persuade himself that he was only performing his public duty in remaining firm about the opera which he had been forced to condemn.

He was replying to the note from the lady of the world, complacently giving this reason, when Lisa's arrival below was announced to him. Von Plauen started from his seat after the servant had gone to summon her. Was not her coming a proof of her devotion to the composer? Still, it gave him great delight that she had thus come of her own self; it was his moment of power.

If you had seen the 'delicate-handed dilettante' then in the midst of the luxury of his palace, you would have wondered that this simple earnest woman standing before him had inspired the great passion of his life. Von Plauen turned pale as she entered,

for he felt that the power of that moment belonged to her, and his wilful tyranny shrank before her strength. She made him feel ashamed of his own wilfulness ; and yet nothing but his action of yesterday would have brought her to-day—he did not regret it. This thought hardened him, and he said coldly, ‘ This is an unexpected pleasure—a visit from the Fräulein Vaara is a favour I did not think to receive.’

‘ Your Excellency, I have not come to confer any favour on you, only to implore one.’

‘ That surprises me also, and pleases me not less. I take it as magnanimous of you, Fräulein Vaara, after sending the reply you did to my letter on Wednesday, to come and ask a favour of me on Friday, and I should be glad to have it in my power to help you.’

Lisa winced at these words ; but she strove not to show that her knees trembled,

and to steady her voice. 'Your Excellency will be generous and forgive me for thus coming, when I have so little claim on your consideration; but I have come because I had something special to say. Count von Plauen, you have acted thoughtlessly in stopping Josquin Dorioz's opera. You do not know all the cruelty of your action; and I come to show it to you, and to rouse your better impulses. Do you know all that you have done in disappointing his hopes?'

Von Plauen's lips were compressed, and his face pale with anger.

'Yes, Madam, you come because you think that, professionally, you have every right to make use of me, though on other ground you will not meet me. But you know that it is in my bureau that I discuss business, and I do not like to be harassed at home by such affairs.'

Lisa's face flushed with humiliation, for she felt herself in a false position. 'I am not a woman of the world, your Excellency ; I am not one of those ladies among whom your life has been passed, and I daresay I am not acting according to their rules by thus coming.'

He softened immediately.

'And do you not think that this is what I have chosen in you, do you not believe that I am sick of the conventional women I live amongst?' but she was even more afraid of his tenderness than his sarcasm, and went on hastily,

'Forgive me, Count, I cannot listen to this. I pray you only let me say what I have come to say.

'I think you did not know what you were doing yesterday when you stopped the opera of my poor friend ; you think, probably, it is a mere temporary disappointment

you inflict, that in time you will make it up to him ; but I will tell you what you did ; it was as if you plucked the pillow from under a dying man's head. Just listen—you have power, wealth, you have beauty all round you, and you have hundreds to love and be loved by ; you cannot imagine what it is to struggle, to have given up everything for music, to have no other delight ; and then, when even life seems to be failing, to concentrate all your hope in your work, in its success ; to long to leave something behind to be remembered by. This is what his opera is to Josquin Dorioz ; it is his one ewe lamb, and you are like the rich man in the Bible, Count ; oh, restore his hope to him !—you might save his life—and think what that happiness would be to your life's end !'

‘ My dear Madam, it is not a question of charity ; I had good reasons for stopping the rehearsals of your friend's opera for the

present. Perhaps next autumn he can renew them.'

Lisa was so importunate that he sought any loop-hole for appeasing her.

'But this is the point I want to bring before your Excellency. Next year it may be too late, and then you cannot be free from remorse. Think impartially of his work; do you in your heart doubt its genius, do you not see its beauty? I *know* that it is beautiful, and that it will give delight to many hundreds for many years, but if his success and his fame come too late for him to know, if he passed away without hearing his thought expressed, without feeling the sympathy of those who listen, and it was your fault!—would not the music that outlived him, even his tunes whistled in the street, pursue you with remorse? Nay,' she went on, carried away by the image her own words brought up: 'would not his spirit

seem to haunt you, hovering over you when called back by his own inspiration? For you are very powerful, Count von Plauen, but beauty is stronger yet; if not now, later it will overcome you . . .’ She could go on no farther, for she dreaded the choking sobs that rose up in her throat. Von Plauen had been gazing at her, giving way to his passionate admiration for the whole woman, her massive graceful form as she stood supplicating before him (for she had silently refused the seat he had offered her), the pure brow from which her bright hair rippled, the originality of her gestures—the great soul beseeching out of her grey eyes suffused through her fervour.

‘Child,’ he said bitterly, ‘this lad has infatuated you with feelings that make you magnify all he does.’

‘No, no, it is no illusion,’ she said quickly: ‘he will become a favourite soon; *then* you

would not have it said, your Excellency, that you hurried on his death.'

'Hush!' he cried, 'you don't know what you are talking about. I look upon this work with calm eyes; at first I was too much predisposed to judge well of it, afterwards I found I had been mistaken and that it would never answer: you really must allow me to judge, to fulfil my office conscientiously.'

'No, Count von Plauen!'—she saw that he had almost persuaded himself that this was true, she felt that she must look him honestly in the face, and for her friend's sake make him to see his own selfishness. 'Three months ago did you not stop the opera in Vienna?' he started, for he had not thought that she knew this. 'Last spring did you not unconditionally refuse it? but, your Excellency, you were not yourself in thus acting; I believe that you only act selfishly in ignorance of the suffering you cause—you have better impulses.'

‘Lisa!’ he said, with a quick movement towards her, ‘speak to me like that, and I will hear you! Unhappy woman! you waste your sentiment on one who does not really care for you! your words are eloquent, your eyes, your beautiful lips speak while you plead for him! for him alone you have pity, for my suffering you have none, by your coldness you force me to seem harsh and selfish. Oh divine Lisa, to see your foot on this carpet, your beautiful presence in this chamber has been my dream, and now you are here and you come of your own accord—this chamber is where I live most, my dark solitary fancies fill it with your gloom, come and lighten it with your presence! if you are once my wife all the music of Dresden will be in your hands: you will move the hand that moves your friend’s fate,’ he went on with gestures suitable to his flowery speech. ‘I shall follow where you lead me, you

will learn to love me . . .’ She had waited breathlessly to hear one word that would give her hope for Josquin; he had forgotten her petition in this declaration of his love, and then her heart sunk with terror, and the shame of having listened thus far patiently.

‘Pray, your Excellency, spare me this—you said that I acted magnanimously in coming to ask a favour of you: treat me so too—only listen to my petition.’

He dropped her hands and drew back coldly again into himself.

‘So you have no thought or wish for anything but your friend’s success?’

‘Only give me that and I will thank you from the bottom of my heart.’

‘And if Dorioz should live to enjoy his success, you will live for him as you are serving him this day?’

‘Your Excellency is mistaken,’ she answered, flushing angrily: ‘he and I have

been as brother and sister from childhood. I am acting to-day only as a sister to a dear dying brother.'

'And if I save his opera I shall win your love, Lisa?' he went on, only lowering his voice and looking more steadfastly at her.

She gave a slight shudder. She was going to speak resolutely, but Josquin's image at the conductor's desk came up before her, his radiant face—she faltered for his sake.

'Who knows? perhaps far off—but, Count von Plauen, will you not for the sake of his youth, for the sake of beauty, for your own sake, alter your decision?'

'Lisa, will you give me love for my love?' he said quite low, looking close into her face; 'when I have gained that then shall your friend's opera be performed. Listen!' he said, louder, as she turned to leave the room: 'you feel that you can never give up your

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CHAPTER IX.

A LAST TEA-PARTY.

THE lady who had written to von Plauen urging her patronage in favour of Josquin's opera lived in a fashionable part of the town, and gave small æsthetic reunions where she and her chosen friends talked about the Soul to excellent Dr. Ivanhoff, the affections of the heart and their conjugal disappointments, to the various philosophers, chiefly of the encyclopedic school who visited them, discussed music and poetry with senators, and every imaginable subject with their chosen musician Josquin Dorioz.

About a month after the interruption of

his rehearsals, when he had disappeared from among this agreeable society—Josquin had given up playing in the orchestra, and spite of all efforts not to be crushed by his disappointment, had gradually under its influence sunk into the life of an invalid—the doctor would bring him many messages and assurances of interest sent by kind enquirers from this amiable little world. One lady sent rare flowers, another some words for a song, the charming hostess herself an album, in which she begged he would write a few words: ‘My boy, you will have them all here soon to take care of you,’ said Ivanhoff. ‘I must tell them, however, that they will have to put off seeing you till next year, when you can play to them again. What about your departure to Naples?’

‘Thank you, Doctor, for talking about next year, but I think it will be to see Naples and die. Charles urges my going with him ;

he is such a good fellow, and I shall be able to work there, it will suit me well enough.'

'That is well settled,' the Doctor said, cheerfully; 'you must avoid our cold winds this spring, and come back to us in July. Meanwhile, will you not give me an adieu to these ladies? they won't let you go without leaving them some token.'

'What *can* I do? writing in an album is such a poor substitute for playing them a tune. Look here, Doctor, there are so many who have been kind to me—if you will not let me go out at night, will you let me give a little entertainment here? we might polish up the boards for a dance.'

'Oh, I do not sanction a dance, but if you wish to fiddle to them again, there is no reason why you should not invite a little party to come here.'

'Yes, and Lisa will help the music; and with these festive flowers we can give an

entertainment—the Capellmeisterin, too, it will please. They have all done so much for me. Before starting we will have a party.’

Their departure to Naples was a scheme of Charles, whose splendour was now of substantial good to his cousin.

Charles was charming. He was enjoying himself immensely in Dresden; but determined to leave all his fun to take Josquin to Italy, with the double hope of seeing him recover and successfully bring out his works. Josquin turned to him with relief, away from the dreary Paradies; and his presence animated him momentarily. With Lisa his tenderness and gentleness increased every day; but Lisa knew what he wanted to keep her ignorant of—the overwhelmings of despondency to which he gave way when alone, the bitter regret with which he left the shadows of his old hopes. Regenfurth, who had made herself his nurse, and who used to go to him

at all times, told her this ; but she needed not to be told. The new works which he had eagerly begun a month before under the influence of his success, and which he now did not seem to have inclination to finish, told her plainly of his despair ; and she carried about with her a dull fear at her heart—the fear of facing an idea which, nevertheless, seemed every day to grow in terrible distinctness. At first she tried to keep hope, that in the end all would be well, and that Josquin would live to do without von Plauen's interest ; but for one week past she had ceased to hope. Everything seemed to be hurrying on to a quick end. Her friend was going away from her to Italy. Should she ever see him again ?

But Lisa always did her best when with Josquin to prevent his thoughts from dwelling on himself, or the approaching departure, and the proposal of the musical

party at his rooms delighted her. And not less interested was Regenfurth, when Josquin asked her to see to lemonade, wax-candles, and bäckerei, and zuckerei, at her discretion. Faustina with much difficulty was persuaded to come ; for she had given up going out except to the opera. All the ladies from the other end of the town accepted graciously, excusing their husbands. Charles, of course, was to come, and one or two of Josquin's particular men friends, and Bleikopf, and Paradies, and Anchio, were included at the end of the list.

On the evening of his party, Josquin was dressed with the old elegance. Regenfurth had pondered over every detail till she was quite incapable of deciding on anything, and ended by letting Josquin push about his own furniture, and arrange everything, in delight at the resolution he showed. Lisa, in her own way, concentrated herself upon the

music. She showed only active interest to Josquin, but to her heart the preparations for the little feast seemed to have all the solemnity of a farewell, and this made her miserable. But they did not speak of his departure.

The lady who had sent the album arrived in a cloud of blue with telling little flaxen curls. She and all her friends were charmed with the quaintness of the old Klosterhaus, which once more was astonished by the sight of painted chairs and liveries. Charles made himself agreeable, and the Doctor arrived ; but Josquin's other friends were a little late, and the ladies talked in subdued whispers. Paradies stood dejected in the doorway, while Anchio and Bleikopf took refuge with Regenfurth and made 'unendlich spass.' Presently in came Faustina to warm them all with her beaming smile.

She said she was sixty that day, and wanted to hear what music sounded like

on her sixtieth birthday ; and they sang and played the serenade which Josquin had composed so many years before. When it was over she said, ' That is the last serenade I shall have had given me ; the first was in Venice, when the Capellmeister was my lover—it went so . . . ' she said, sitting down to the clavichord. ' Every night Hasse came and sang it to me till the people next door listened, and put down our music, and published it, and there was an end to that serenading.'

' What are they listening to?' asked Paradies, who had taken refuge in the inner room. ' Hush, it is Faustina Hasse singing,' answered Anchio. Quite soft and low she whispered to the rippling measure of her accompaniment ; it was a mere trifle, but you had Venice all before you, the stilted young lover with his guitar, the gracious lady answering—she ended with a flute-like shake that made all open their eyes, they crowded round to thank

her. 'Ah, you should have lived ten years sooner, and I would have sung for you a great deal more,' she said, pressing Josquin's hand.

Then he played them some of their old favourites of Bach and Veracini, and Lisa sang. Charles, who had been enchanted with Faustina, began to think the evening a little solemn, and tried to enliven the lady in blue, but in vain; Josquin's æsthetic little friend swam in high raptures, but soon these were subdued; a strange interest and sympathy seemed to bind together all assembled in the little room, and if they were silent, none desired anything than to listen to the lofty and stirring music that raised their hearts to all high and good thoughts. Then came the time for Regenfurth's refreshments; with a charming grace the young host performed his duties, and afterwards Faustina asked him to play once more. If it would not be too much for him, she said, he must give

them something of his own to carry away with them finally in their minds that night.

Lisa watched him from the dark corner where she had taken refuge to listen ; he stood up now to comply with Faustina's request. All the evening she had hungrily listened to the loved tones, the sound she loved best in the world, and her eyes were not satisfied with gazing at the features and form ever full of new fascination for her. As she looked at him now and listened, suddenly her whole soul was lifted up and carried along by a great flood of tenderness. Josquin had preluded for a while on his instrument, when he burst from uncertain indications into an air of passionate pleading melody ; it was the same that had betrayed once to Lisa his love for Cécile, sounding on her in the night when he rushed back to the Klosterhaus to be consoled by his music : once it had told her of his return to her, now it spoke of parting near at hand.

He had introduced it in his overture which she had never heard played. Josquin now seemed to be pouring out all his force, and each one who listened seemed to be moved by his passion ; he looked once towards Lisa, the hot tears were dropping on her cheeks, the sobs would rise up. But the playing ceased, and with the music the relief of tears stopped. And the time for departing had come ; the chairs were waiting to convey the guests through the silent streets to their homes, where they would take with them the remembrance of an evening spent as it were out of the world. All were saying ‘ Lebwohl ’ and ‘ Auf’s Wiedersehn,’ but Lisa heard that Josquin answered to all ‘ Lebwohl,’ and her heart was oppressed almost by a physical weight of pain, and she escaped with Regenfurth unable to say a word of farewell.

CHAPTER X.

ALCESTIS.

ALL that night Lisa did not cease to hear the air of the overture to Josquin's opera crying out with the sorrow at her heart, speaking the passionate tenderness of her love, her overwhelming dismay at parting. All was over; the end was incompleteness; with hopes all unfulfilled, he left the life they had shared, the place of his inspirations, in despair, without hope of returning! Then it seemed to her that the music she strove to shut out became a prayer, it pleaded, it reproached—was it all really over, was not there something left undone? All was confusion in her

thoughts during the hours of the night, when the stillness of darkness add to the excitement of the brain ; but when the morning came she felt that her thoughts must be shaped, that the question, which she had so long put aside, had once been asked and now must be answered. Could she not procure for Josquin the happiness of hearing his work before leaving, give him the assurance that his music was saved before he died ? There was the idea clear before her that she shrank from realising before, and she sat up suddenly on her bed facing the question with a strong impulse . . . at the price of making Josquin happy before he went, would it be difficult to marry the Hof Intendant ?

At that moment with such a great decision before her to make, strangely enough Lisa's course seemed to her only too plain ; an idea had taken full possession of her, and she felt herself that she was bringing to it a sufficiently

calm mind, the love that filled her heart seemed to take away from her all power of reasoning.

It is told as a miracle of a gentle saint by his biographer that for a space of years before his death he never drew a breath without a mental intention of love to God ; we, too, in the world have seen some such wonders of love and devotion working every day in hearts not frittered away by its distractions, one woman's absorption in her first-born, another's love for him who seems to her the best thing she knows—who shall say that such affection is illusion, infatuation, it seems the highest that life can offer man, whose true happiness is not pleasure, or knowledge, or power, but love, and adoration, and when slaking life's daily thirst at such rills, he seems nearest to approach the very fount and source of love ? It was this sort of devotion that made Lisa's sacrifice seem only too easy to her. Hers was the simple nature, like

a rare stone's that is cut with a plain surface, not in many facets reflecting the same thing in many ways, manifold and complex ; she was clear as crystal, broad and simple in her judgments. Now she knew only this ; Josquin was dying, and with her, perhaps, it lay to prolong his life, at least to give him happiness before the end ; when he was gone would not this be her one comforting memory when life would have no satisfaction left, when her art, her success, would have become nothing to her ? His image would always be with her, as it was now, patient, sweet, animating all who came near him, still clinging to life, but, as she knew, sickening with despair, when only Regenfurth observed him.

And oh ! was not she the cause of his failure and disappointment ? what perpetual reproach would haunt her if she let him go thus ! And she rose up with a sudden

impulse . . . perhaps it would be too late ! Von Plauen might reject her sacrifice ; unbearable thought ! she must go at once, promise him faithfulness and constancy ; why had she delayed so long when it was the one thing she could do for Josquin ?

But Lisa knew that so far she had put this thing from her as impossible, and now that she saw it so clearly as her duty she must not rush hastily into it ; thinking was pain, but she must force herself to look into the gloomy realities of the sacrifice that had so strange an allurements for her. It was not only her liberty, it was her art, her beloved daily work which she would have to give up to von Plauen. She dressed herself and went out into the morning to gather her thoughts together, to see if there was no way of escape. That music in her ears pleads with her, and she must find out what was to be done.

The winter morning shone bright and

clear. It was Sunday, and the bells rang all over the town; the people smiled holiday, which had begun for them hours ago, for they had already had their coffee, and morning concert; the faces of the little children were burnished as they looked up at the tall woman passing them by with grave looks and troubled eyes. She was contemplating a strange vision of marriage which came to her in garments of mourning and terrible pall. Marriage had never been to Lisa what it is to other girls; it was indeed the purely conventional aspect that it always presented to her mind that made her think little now of von Plauen's feelings; she knew that she would fulfil her duty to him, save him from his life of egotism perhaps, conscientiously fulfil his bond. But even as she promised herself this, the dreariness of it all came over her, the contrast with the life to which she thought she had been called—to give up now her whole will to the man who did her

such a great wrong, to exchange this for the vocation she had dreamt, to have no more a public to live for, her beloved art to serve, but one passion only to satisfy, one strong will to submit to. And she looked out on the world of sunshine, from the bridge, where, with the usual impulse to look over on the rushing flood, she had stopped, and realising the bitterness of the fate that made such havoc of her life, she could have cried out under her burden to One above to right His wearied wicked world. Across the water the Hof-Kirche bells were clanging, they were calling the weary and heavy-laden, and bright Sunday holiday faces were obeying their summons ; as an old woman passed with her book, Lisa instinctively followed, and entered the church, already filled with a crowd listening to the sermon before the Mass, and knelt and hid her face by the door.

The High Altar was being prepared

while the preacher, a Benedictine monk, concluded his sermon. Lisa felt as though she had no need of a preacher ; but the monk had the ordinary impassioned gesture and style of his order, and held his audience in thrall, and in the fervent tones there was something that reached her soul, as they wailed through the church ; suddenly she heard the concluding words ; like the rest of the sermon they breathed the spirit of the whole Catholic Church.

‘Beloved, when we want to speak we must be silent, when we want to be alone we must seek mortification in the contrary tempers of others, when we want to be filled we must hunger and thirst, when we lust after life, and sensation, and knowledge, we must annihilate ourselves, and humiliate our vain intellects—so only in small things to learn the great things of life, the lesson that turn where we will we must be met with, that

sooner or later each one must learn for himself. Renunciation ! it is the law of life ! it is written in letters of fire in God's own heavens, it is expressed in groanings and travailings from all nature that appears so smiling ; it is taught in the world for all its light-hearted scorn. Even there, sooner or later, it comes to each one in death and disease, and in the unstableness of life. It is the dread necessity of suffering which is the mystery of life ! where shall we find the key to it ? From every carven niche what do the saints cry out to us ? from blackened stakes and dark dungeons what is the martyrs' cry but Calvary ! Calvary ! and from our hearts comes the response, the cry of our crucified wills, the Calvary within us ! Beloved ! will you learn the lesson of renunciation where the saints have learnt it, or will you wait till to each in turn, life will teach it in its cruel partings, its unsatisfactoriness, its inevitable

death? There on the Altar prepared for its Lord's descent you will find the only solution to life's mystery! No sacrifice! no Sacrament! Willing or unwilling, we must all renounce. Here alone is the sanctification of sacrifice! Now when you meet your Lord at His Altar, bow your head and will, resolve to live the life, and unite yourself to the mystery that has been ordained from the foundation of the world, and is now made manifest in Jesus Christ.'

As he passionately spoke the words 'No sacrifice, no sacrament!' he turned towards the altar where the lights shone in readiness. And now the organ raised devotion in many hearts; and as the solemn Kyrie was wafted along the nave, Lisa's conflict was merged into one great aspiration; all around her rose, and sat or knelt again with the different parts of the service, but she knelt on. For her was not yet the song of praise, for the conflict was not over; no epistle or lesson

did she read, for the inner voice was strong. *Et incarnatus et homo factus est.* There was one poor soul in the church that day who felt the law of sacrifice one with her loving and humbled heart.

The mass was ended, and the organ pealed out, the people departed with a great shuffling, and she stood outside with the same questions as before pressing on her ; but the words of the monk seemed in their sternness to give the answer to them all. When she wanted to be silent, she would be obliged to speak ; when she would crave for sympathy she must hold her tongue ; when she wanted to weep she would have to smile ; well, and if she did not voluntarily give herself to this life of small sacrifice, did not necessity impose it upon her now when she was losing Josquin ? Love gave her the impulse now ; love would support her in carrying out the sacrifice, and even to him

also who inflicted it upon her it would be turned to good account.

As Lisa returned towards home she saw clearer and clearer what lay before her to do ; there was no time to be lost, and she must have done with conflict, and not shrink in her sacrifice. First, she must be as honest as she could with von Plauen ; she knew that her openness had never driven him back, and even for Josquin's sake now she must affect nothing with him she did not feel ; she would show him that she was ready to renounce her profession in marrying him, and to submit her will to his for all her life. Then she would require of him a sacrifice in return ; he must let her take her farewell to the stage in Josquin's opera, and immediately find a pretext for putting it into rehearsal again. It would be no small thing to ask for, but afterwards a life's docility would repay him !

Poor Elisabetha ! she does well to resolve to act quickly ; not to dwell in mistrust on

her excitable nature, and impatient moods, so little fitted to the life of conventionality she will have to follow. She does well to turn for strength to the thought of happiness still remaining for her in the joy of giving his success to Josquin, of working for it, whilst once more singing for him. She needs to be strong in her purpose, for almost alone she must act it out; and how unheroic, how difficult is action! Alcestis, inspired by love, lays her tender body down by the side of her husband to wait for death; this poor Alcestis may not lie passive, though death itself would seem to her now welcome rest. She must return home at once, and looking round on all she has loved so long with the bitterness of farewell, take pen, ink and paper with all fear of being too late to write to Count von Plauen that she is willing to be his wife.

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CHAPTER XI.

STARLIGHT.

ONCE more at the theatre—where should this history end better than at its door?—after the curtain has fallen, and when the lights are being extinguished, after the play. Josquin's opera has just been performed, and the true actors are now coming out under the stars which best illuminate their play, because it is human and divine, and has the world and its life for limits of time and space. Lisa's love has done its work, her strong purpose has wrought calmly all that she desired with the passion and perception of a strong impulse. Her bargain has been accepted a month before by von Plauen, and all that Josquin knows of it is that by a

sudden caprice the Hof-Intendant has altered his mind, and allowed the production of his 'Alcestis ;' that as it were in a dream he has just heard his music and her performance crowned with success ; and that the end has now come, for he is leaving with Charles for the south on the following day, as his only hope of life.

Josquin never knew what Lisa had done for him ; and yet by a sort of instinct now after the excitement and the rapture, as they come out of the dim ghostly theatre, which an hour before resounded with their names called together by an enthusiastic crowd, he was scarcely conscious of anything but Lisa, and she too seemed to feel that he hung upon her, and was strong and calm above her usual powers. Perhaps it was Paradies who had been most excited by the performance. He was coming out of the theatre now, trembling from head to foot. When the composer's name had been calle^d

for, he had nearly precipitated himself upon the stage ; and he had hung about poor Josquin's neck, till the Doctor (who faithfully watched over his patient all the evening), reminded him of his want of dignity. Charles was there too ; he had been hard at work clapping—rushing from one part to the other of the theatre in wild spirits and back to the composer's side between the acts, to cheer him with accounts of the general enthusiasm. And Faustina had been there . . . thrilled through and through with hope and fear ; and breaking down in tears, as she sate in her box, forgetful even to watch the tide of rising enthusiasm in the suffrage given to her darling by the public. Hasse had been there, solemnly listening, drinking in the music that he loved and was proud of, more than he said—little disturbed by the emotions of those around him. And there, too, had been von Plauen. Ivanhoff for a moment had been by his side, and

heard him mutter between his lips : ‘ Only one night of this . . . and then one night less will there be to the end of it all.’ But Ivanhoff had not remained long in the theatre : he felt that he could not sit still and contemplate this Alcestis, knowing all her history ; for only he in all the theatre knew that this woman who was pouring out her whole soul on the stage in her friend’s opera was von Plauen’s wife—that she had at this price, a month before, bought his success for the composer, and that after making her decision, Lisa had, with the Doctor as sole witness, been secretly married to the Count. The union was to be publicly declared at the end of the season, when Lisa should leave the stage. Thus had she contrived that Josquin should not know of her sacrifice. It had been impossible for him not to observe that she saw more of the Count than before. He felt sure that she allowed his visits for his sake. He had even once implored her to

make no effort for him. . . . but through all these months in spite of interruptions, in spite of her secret anguish, when together, their intercourse had been perfect. He seemed to have gone beyond their common life, and in the twilight of the valley of death Lisa could show him her love as she could not before. Now he was going, and in his weakness and sorrow he clung to her with utter reliance and tenderness. He would only hear of what she had done for him under other skies.

It could not be otherwise ; he could not have known any of the exquisite pleasure he had tasted that night—of which Lisa's sacrifice was the price—if he had known that to it he owed the success of his work. He had seen his '*Alcestis*' on the stage, little dreaming that he himself was the unhappy Admetus. All the delight he had known in the first full rehearsal had returned to him just now—the first signs of coldness and oppo-

sition in the audience had overcome him very much, but the applause secured by the many genuine admirers of his work, who came determined to over-ride the prejudice of von Plauen's party, had added strangely little to his satisfaction. That was the rare satisfaction of the poet by the side of which criticism is as a dull and tame farm-fowl to the lark at heaven's gate. To the artist the criticism is honourable—but to the man it is wholly powerless. The satisfaction that made Josquin dull to praise, had caused him to completely break down in the *finale* of long prolonged major chords—he had wept like a child. Strung up by the excitement of conducting, when he reached these chords, a sudden happiness took hold of him, as though the very sum of it all were in the triumphant key-note; he felt a sense of the perfect equilibrium of things, in love with all the joy and sorrow of life, and like another Ganymede he was ready to soar upward to

the Father of all life. But the last chord was done, the^r rapture was over, the colours had all passed away from his eyes and with the relaxation of his high tension, he gave way and hid his head helpless on the desk.—

And now they all come out of the theatre, and the sound of rolling wheels and the footsteps of the last lingerers are faint in the distance, and it is night, and starlight and solemn peace. The air is cool and grateful, the few lights from the bridge twinkle in the black river. Indeed, the spangled heaven above speaks to their hearts, stirred by emotions and raised by the love of the beautiful.

‘The stars are illuminating for you, my boy,’ Ivanhoff said, as he began to put the Capellmeisterin, into the chair in which Hasse already was seated, waiting.

‘Yes, it is the grand concert of the heavens that has begun now. And why should we box ourselves up in stuffy things on such a night?’ Faustina said: ‘thank you,

dear Doctor ; for my part I shall walk home to-night if you will accompany me.'

'Faustina, what madness ! for you and for the boy, you both want to kill yourselves,' called out Hasse : 'look at him, star-gazing as usual.' This was interrupted by his being helplessly carried off by the porters obeying a gesture of Faustina's, and the chair came home without her, and nobody interfered with her nor with Josquin, who assured them all that the evening quiet would be the best thing for him. Ivanhoff secured the Capellmeisterin, Paradies stepped forward to offer Lisa his arm, but with one accord all combined to ask him to fetch their forgotten wraps from the theatre, and when he came back Lisa had gone on with Josquin, and he was obliged to give his arm to Regenfurth. Lisa's arm was in Josquin's arm, her hand in his hand, and in silence they walked along ; and thus they reached the Capellmeister's house, where they must part.

‘My divine Alcestis,’ he said, holding and pressing her hand; ‘dearest Lisa—you alone, alone—for ever and ever.’

The Capellmeisterin came up from behind. ‘Oh, Josquin! what a beautiful night this has been for us,’ she said; ‘look up there, I find I do not get tired of that or any other harmony. Good-night, children—yes cover me up warm; I grow old, and want your loving care. Good-night.’ She went into the house; Josquin walked away with the doctor and Charles; Elisabetha stood alone on the doorstep looking up at the night. Who shall say what filled her heart as she remained alone with Josquin’s whisper still in her ear. It was like a sudden leap of light and then darkness, the joy, the delight were past for evermore, the suffering lay all before her. The solemn night received the great sigh she breathed into it, but something said, Peace; an answer from the stars.

CONCLUSION.

OF Love and renouncing—of death and departing, who shall tell us that we may not speak in a world of failing sad men's hearts? Is there no divine good in grief that we should turn our eyes to the lives of fulfilled hope and happiness from beholding those in which to love and suffer pain appears to be law, into which the capacity for the one is borne with the capacity for the other? and yet wherever such suffering hearts have crossed our path, we instinctively find for them a blessing—their throes and pangs we feel still help the birth of the better man,—we cling to their teaching, we bless their pain. But if we have told of Sacrifice and its loving impulses—Death we pass silently by, for it

is the great silent mystery over each man's life, beyond and around which each man for himself interprets the unspeakable Hope.

The cold spring winds that the doctor had dreaded were over, and the lilacs once more made the little garden of the Klosterhaus sweet; but no change of season brought Josquin back to his rooms on the high fourth floor. The inhabitants came and went as usual, and rose and struggled and served their different publics; and from them had passed for ever Lisa, who had lived her life so fully there.

The news of Josquin's death reached her only a month after the performance of the 'Alcestis.' He and Charles had not got farther than Meran when the end came very suddenly. The letters he wrote to her were addressed to the Klosterhaus, and they only spoke of her and her plans, and begged her to tell him more about herself (for each only

mentioned the other in their letters). Thus had Charles faithfully shielded Josquin from the pain of hearing the cost of his opera, although her marriage was now known in Dresden.

And it was Charles himself who brought her the news of his death, with a sort of journal that he had addressed to her since their separation. It spoke of the beauty he saw ; of his and Charles's daily life ; he described his open window at beautiful Meran, the blue sky, the blue Perugino mountain opposite, the Corpus Christi procession going by in the street below, with soldiers bringing up the rear, their band bursting with ' God save the Emperor ! ' ' Lisa, do you remember my first conversion with the soldier's march ? *c'est encore ce que j'aime le mieux* '—he wrote in French. He had scarcely added anything more ; von Plauen read his wife's correspondence, but he found no fault with these

descriptive pages. Every word to Lisa had a deep and hidden meaning.

Eleven years afterwards the castle at Teplitz was still von Plauen's favourite residence, when fashionable water-drinkers began to wonder at the power which it was said his wife still held over him. It was not often they had an opportunity of criticising her, but sometimes the early bathers, taking their daily round in the neighbouring park, would meet her walking, attired with complete disregard for the becoming, or they would see her opening, with little graciousness, some entertainment at the public rooms. Even those who had felt her power as the singer Lisa Vaara, would think her temper and manner a drawback in private life. Had the trial been too much for this poor Alcestis? In small troubles we believe Lisa could vent her impatience, her deep grief she kept to herself, and her heart was not hardened.

From the life of Teplitz she was saved some years after her marriage, when von Plauen lost a large fortune in a sudden passion for playing. Then Lisa came back to the stage and once more was great and rich by her talent. The Klosterhaus she purchased for her own use, and it was turned into an asylum for old musicians, with a wing devoted to young beginning artists. Regenfurth was instituted as matron, and used to get into great scrapes for laxity about her charges' attendance at sermon and Sunday morning prayers.

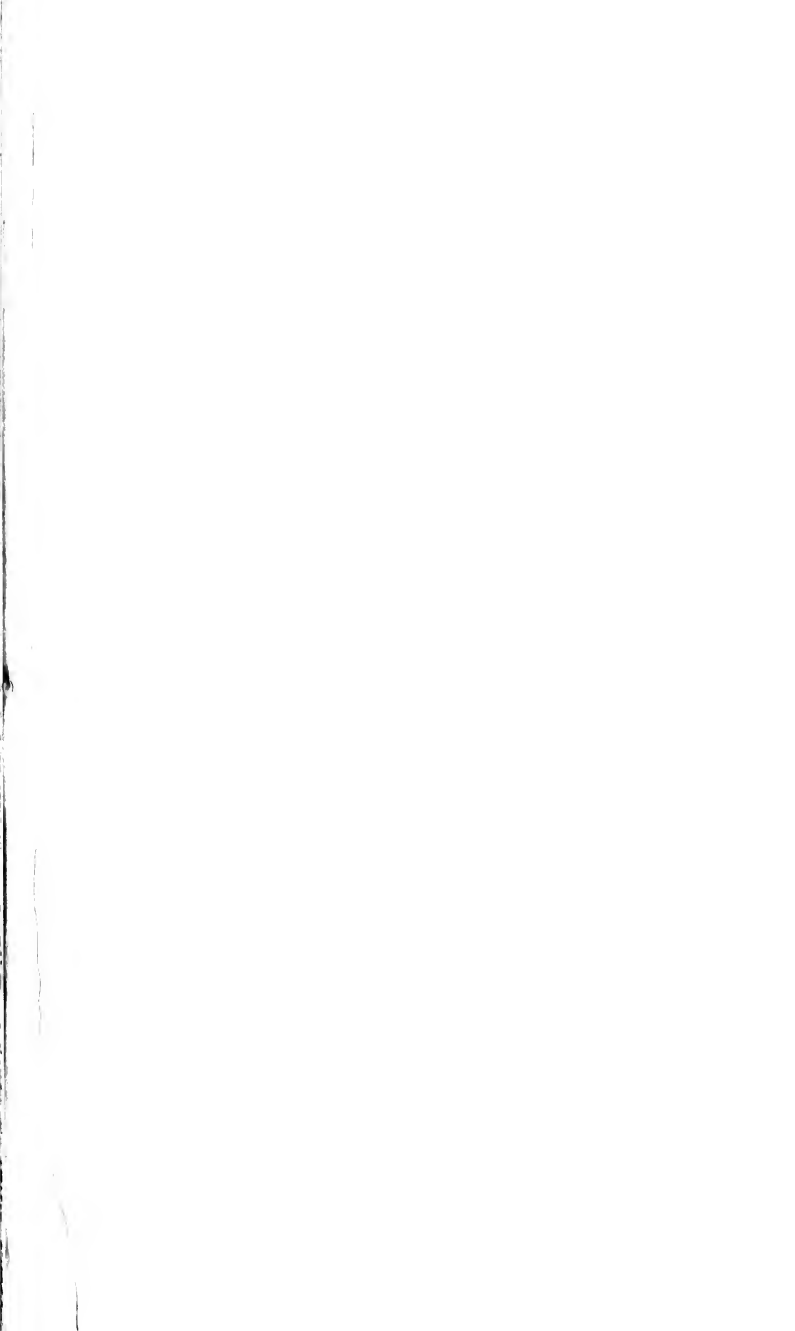
Paradies became a fashionable preacher, and fulminated in the Hof-Kirche, but Lisa would not let him hold forth in the chapel she had restored at the Klosterhaus. She preferred the comfort of an old Lutheran pastor, with whom she spent many hours of counsel.

Charles made a brilliant match, and inherited soon after, the great Vienna mansion. His two boys were looking through the treasures of the old lumber-room, at the top, when the youngest came upon a child's violin in its case, on which was inscribed in a large hand-writing *Séraphine*; the little fellow got permission to have it, and the old house once more resounded to the music of a little violin.

THE END

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